



## **Blue Hill Avenue... A Community Vision**

Developed by:

**The Blue Hill Avenue Task Force**

**January 1996**

Supported by:

**Thomas M. Menino, Mayor**  
**City of Boston**

**Marisa Lago,**  
Chief Economic Development Officer  
**Charles T. Grigsby,**  
Director, Public Facilities Dept.

Prepared by:

**Stull and Lee, Incorporated**  
Architects and Planners

In coordination with:

**The Public Facilities Department**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Blue Hill Avenue Task Force Members

**Congressman Joseph Kennedy**

**Senator Dianne Wilkerson**

**Representative Charlotte Richie**

**Representative Gloria Fox**

**Councilor Gareth Saunders**

**Nestor Rios**

Alianza Hispana

**Matthew Goode**

Crawford/Howland/Ruthvan/  
Waumbach/Wabeno Block Watch

**Lilla Fredericks**

Devon Street Group

**Ramon Senises**

Dudley / Blue Hill Merchants Association

**Clayton Turnbull**

Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

**Nathaniel Askia**

F.I.R.S.T. Inc.

**Rev. Verdieu Laroche**

First Haitian Church

**Martha Williams**

Five Streets Neighborhood Association

**Juanda Johnson-Taylor**

Freedom House

**Rodney Daily**

Gang Peace

**Lois Lee**

Granite Tenants of Grove Hall

**Herb Jackson**

Greater Roxbury Workers Association

**Barbara Williams**

Grove Hall Elderly Housing Group

**Robert Hector**

Grove Hall Board of Trade

**Reggie Nunnally**

Grove Hall NDC

**Alice Cintron**

Grove Hall Youth Center

**Allen Davis**

Holborn/Gannett/Gaston/Otisfield  
Betterment Association

**I'man Soloman**

Masjid Al-Quran

**Al Lovata**

Merchant, Be Our Guest Party Rentals

**James Carnes**

Merchant, Packy Conners Pub (aka Packy's)

**Daniel Cruz**

Minority Developers Association

**Rev. Nellie Yarrowborough**

Mt. Calvary Church

**Eva Mitchell**

Nation of Islam

**Evelyn Friedman-Vargas**

Nuestra Comunidad

**George Martinez**

Project R.I.G.H.T.

**Magdaline Jigba**

Quincy/Geneva Betterment Association

**Senesie Kabba**

Quincy/Geneva Housing  
Development Corporation

**Leon Nelson**

Roxbury Chamber of Commerce

**Sandra Lovelace-Graham / Zulene Gray-Allen**

Roxbury Multi-Service Center

**Rev. Gerald Osterman**

St. John's / St. Hugh's Church

**Cesar DaSilva**

St. Patrick's Church

**David Lopes**

YouthBuild

**Special thanks to all others who have participated in the Process. (See Appendix 5.)**

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## Executive Summary

This study is the result of an organized effort by local community activists and concerned public leaders to revitalize one of Roxbury's most recognized "Avenues". The intent of the Study is to establish a comprehensive vision and development framework for Blue Hill Avenue, from Dudley Street to Grove Hall.

At the core of this effort was an open and inclusive planning group. This umbrella group was the Blue Hill Avenue Task Force. Its membership included minority developers, contractors, elected officials, representatives of churches, CDC's, business owners, property owners, and neighborhood groups. Sub-committees, made up of Task Force volunteers, were formed to address specific concerns around housing, commercial development, and city services. These and other pertinent issues were the topics of many evening Task Force meetings and served to focus the study.

At the request of the Blue Hill Avenue Task Force, and with the approval of the Mayor's Office and the Public Facilities Department, the architecture and planning firm, Stull and Lee, Incorporated was selected to facilitate the efforts of the Task Force and the Boston Public Facilities Department. Working closely with the Task Force, S+L's role was to develop an urban design vision for the Avenue, a framework for a comprehensive action plan. That vision and framework is the core of the study **"Blue Hill Avenue Initiative - A Community Vision"**.

The portion of Blue Hill Avenue that is the focus of this study is a mile long zone which begins at Dudley Street and ends at Grove Hall, one of Roxbury's best known commercial centers. Its dominant land use pattern is residential with a significant number of small retail and institutional uses scattered throughout. The quality of the built

fabric is generally good with a number of architectural high points. The numerous vacant parcels and buildings in this zone represent tremendous opportunities to rebuild Blue Hill Avenue "...not as it once was, but better than it ever was", as noted by a Task Force member.

Positive characteristics attributed to this area include:

- overwhelming political support for revitalizing Blue Hill Avenue
- an overall increase in the annual sales volume. The per capita income of this community (which over the past five years has actually increased) can support greater community development (i.e., businesses, retail stores, housing, etc.);
- the presence of several strong institutions and community organizations including Franklin Park, the Franklin Park Zoo, the Roxbury Comprehensive Health Center, and the Roxbury Multi-Service Center;
- the strides made by the police and the community to lower the crime rate and to improve the *real* safety of the area, in contrast to the perceptions which exist;
- its zoned status as a major boulevard in the city of Boston, and measured traffic volumes, in excess of 24,000 cars per day, represent substantial opportunities for new businesses.

Along the corridor, and in the surrounding areas, there already are numerous signs of new and proposed development projects. Nearby there are significant public and private sector proposals already underway or nearing completion including the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative Housing projects; a new restaurant in Grove Hall on Blue Hill Avenue; and two new public parks at the intersection of Blue Hill Avenue and Dudley Street. Several development projects have also been proposed by local churches, non-profits and private developers and are awaiting the completion of this study.



*Blue Hill Avenue @ Mid-1900's*

## Report Organization

The Report is organized in four chapters. The first two chapters summarize the overall goals of the Study and the basis for the "vision". The second two establish the "vision" and what will be required to accomplish its objectives.

Chapter 1, **Background of the Study**, addresses the history of the planning study and its key participants. The principal goals of the Blue Hill Avenue Task Force are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 2, **The Study Area**, summarizes the existing characteristics of the designated study area based on field visits and analyses of existing reports. This summary also highlights the issues and opportunities that are key to the revitalization efforts.

Chapter 3, **The Urban Design Vision**, spells out a future "vision" and framework for getting there. Specific case studies are presented for three distinct areas to illustrate physical design objectives. A generalized phasing plan is included to propose critical short term actions.

Chapter 4, **A Strategy for Action**, describes a plan for action and strategic roles to be played by the City, the Task Force, private investors, the community (including local youth), and other interested parties.

**Appendices** have been included to provide specific details to the report as noted in the text.





*Blue Hill Avenue @ Early-1900's*

Stull and Lee, Inc.  
Date: Jan 1996

Blue Hill Avenue...A Community Vision

# **1. Background of the Study**

## **1.1 Introduction**

The gradual economic and physical decline of Blue Hill Avenue over the past three decades is symbolic of the dramatic changes to many inner city neighborhoods throughout the United States.

Several master plans have been developed for the area since the 1980's. This effort is linked to the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program - that is geared towards promoting long term economic and social viability in urban communities. By linking strategic economic, physical and human development directives, with the CDBG Program, the opportunity exists to empower this inner city community to achieve self-sufficiency.

The Blue Hill Avenue Initiative is an action plan to further the revitalization of this Roxbury community through a comprehensive program of infrastructure investment, housing and commercial development projects.

The Initiative builds on unique social, economic and political conditions and community resources within the area. The recommendations that follow are key elements in a new vision for the Blue Hill Avenue corridor and its adjacent communities.

## **1.2 Role of the Task Force**

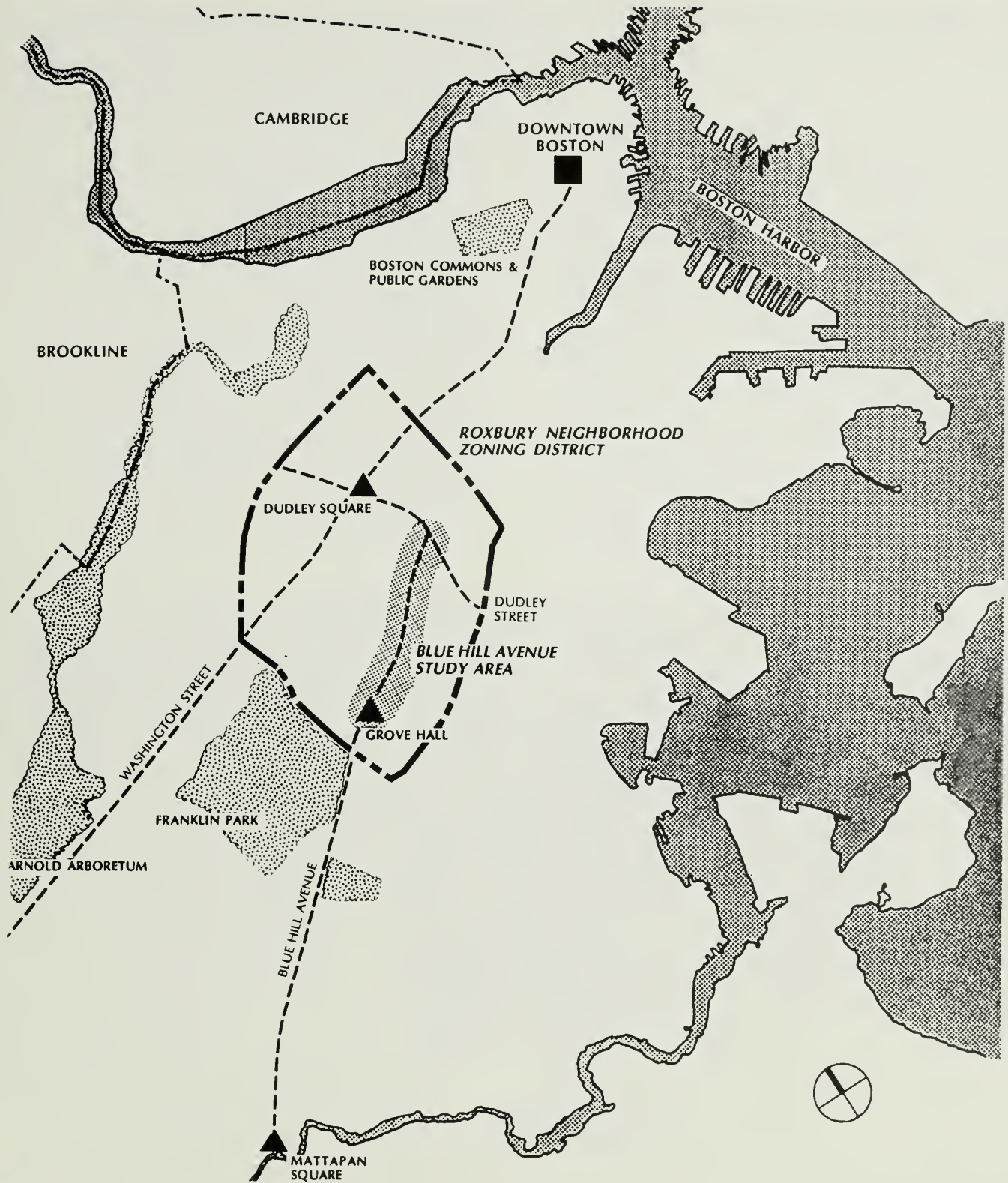
A basic premise of the planning process was that it be open and inclusive. In order to ensure the active and informed participation of the community, the Blue Hill Avenue Task Force was established. This group met throughout the planning process to establish project goals and objectives and to review the planning alternatives as they emerged. In addition, a series of sub-committees

met periodically to review specific development issues including - housing, commercial needs and city-services.

Principal goals of the Task Force are:

1. To make City property available for development that is consistent with the goal of the Plan.
2. Promote complementary development of private vacant property to attract new businesses that provide local goods, services and/or jobs.
3. Support existing businesses that strengthen the Avenue.
4. Address city-service issues including public safety, clean up and infrastructure needs to improve development opportunities.
5. Encourage entrepreneurial opportunities for local residents.
6. Develop marketing strategies to attract new consumers and better serve existing residents.
7. To generate a compelling vision for a revitalized Blue Hill Avenue.





**Figure 1** Site Context Map

## 2. The Study Area

### 2.1 Existing Conditions

Blue Hill Avenue is a four mile major corridor in the City extending from Dudley Street in Roxbury, through Dorchester, to Mattapan Square in Mattapan. The focus of the Blue Hill Avenue Initiative is the one-mile corridor between the Grove Hall and Dudley/Blue Hill business districts. It is characterized by small retail businesses, occupied residential and mixed-use properties, and interspersed with tracts of vacant land and vacant buildings.

The Grove Hall and Dudley Street business districts, which anchor each end of the focus area, have benefited from recent revitalization efforts and contain many viable businesses. Grove Hall

(to Intervale Street) has numerous active businesses and several proposed commercial development projects. The Dudley/Blue Hill intersection is anchored by active businesses and institutional uses.

As shown in the PFD Existing Land Use maps (in Appendix 1), small businesses, mainly service-oriented, are scattered along the rest of the Avenue. Although some are long-standing businesses, many are marginal operations. The remaining uses on the Avenue are primarily institutional and residential. Five churches and a mosque are located near other social service and community development agencies, including the Roxbury Multi-Service Center, Gang Peace and First, Inc. Residential uses are found throughout the Avenue, in 3 and 4-story mixed-use buildings and 2 and 3-family dwellings.



Figure 2 Figure Ground Map - South



The extensive vacant land affects the overall appearance of the Avenue particularly, between Fayston and Brookford Streets (see **Figure 2, Figure Ground Map**). Of the total 55 vacant sites, more than half are City-owned. The most extensive tracts of privately-owned vacant land are located at Maywood and Edgewood, the site of the old Kasenoff Bakery, and at the Quincy Street intersection.

A survey of the existing building conditions (see Appendix 2) - limited to exterior appearances only - was conducted using the following evaluation system:

**Good Structures:** were those with few, if any, deficiencies;

**Fair Structures:** were those with some

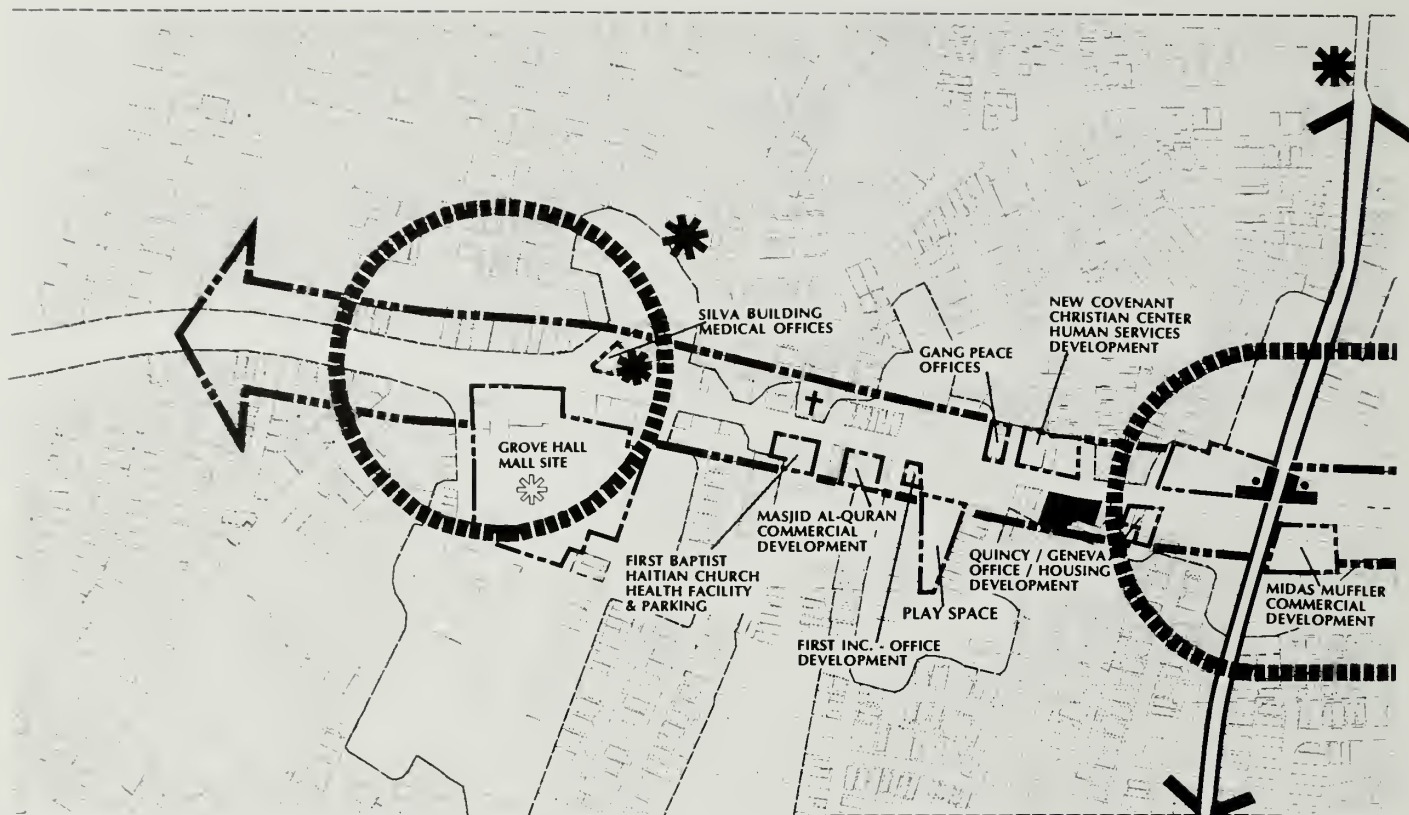
exposed elements of the basic structure, apparent cracks in their facades, requiring significant repairs for deteriorating roofs, porches or garages;

**Poor Structures:** were those typically vacant, requiring, or beyond, major repairs.

Overall, the study area contains many good and fair buildings, particularly on the residential side streets adjacent to the Avenue. The Avenue itself contains more of the fair and poor structures, with the least favorable conditions south of Lawrence Avenue. Almost all of the vacant property in poor shape along the Avenue is privately owned.



**Figure 2** Figure Ground Map - North



**Figure 3** *Issues and Opportunities Synthesis Map - South*

## Legend

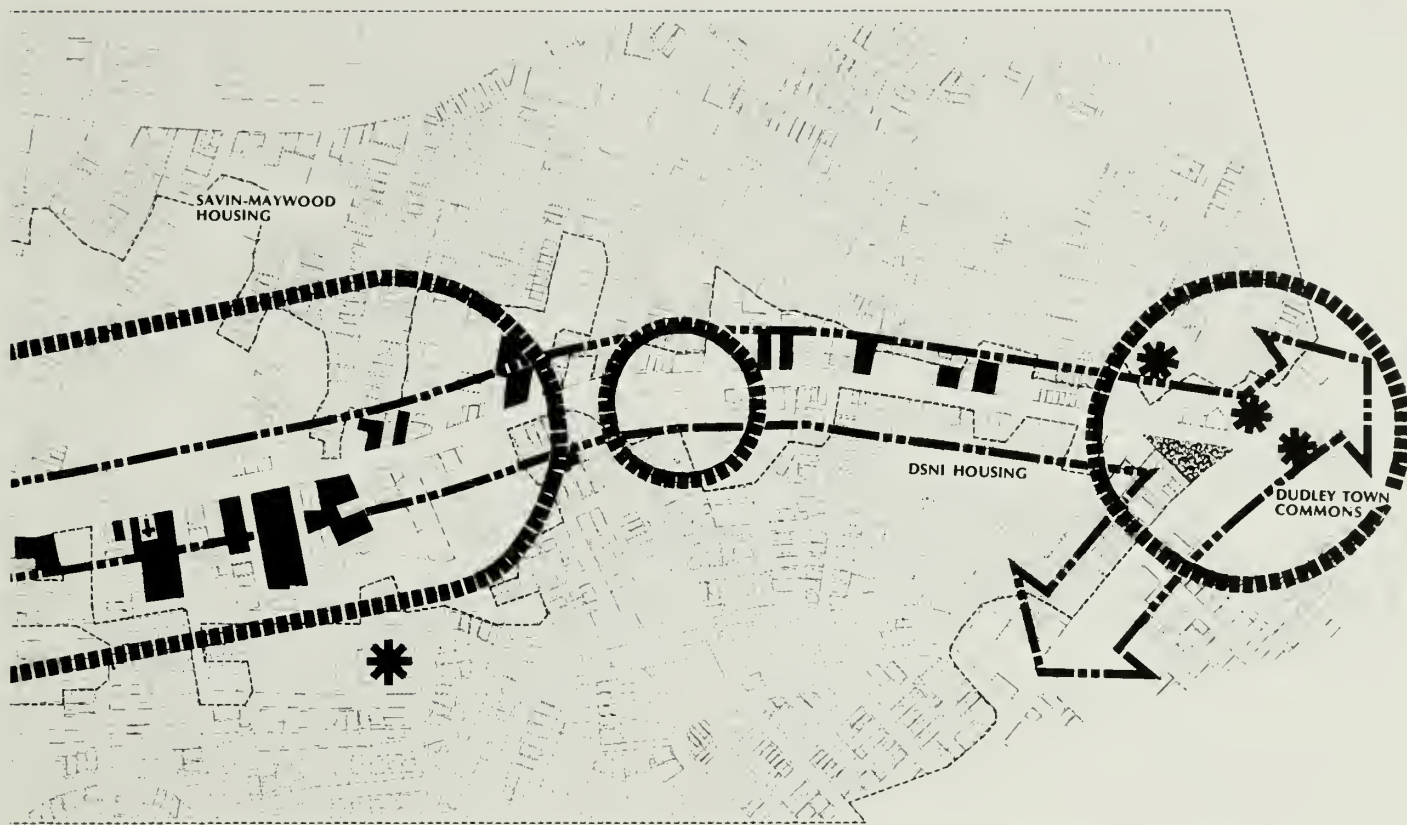
	BOULEVARD PLANNING DISTRICT
	KEY IMPACT AREA
	KEY NODE
	NEIGHBORHOOD ANCHOR
	POTENTIAL GATEWAY FEATURE
	NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCH
	POTENTIAL ANCHOR
	MAJOR CROSS STREET
	POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITES
	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITES
	PROPOSED OPEN SPACE
	HARD ("good") AREAS
	SOFT ("fair - poor") AREAS

## 2.2 Issues and Opportunities

Although the Blue Hill Avenue study area is generally viewed as distressed, many solid qualities do exist. Over time the physical deterioration of the Avenue has disproportionately impacted the overall image and perception of the entire neighborhood, limiting opportunities for needed reinvestment and economic development. Still there is interest in the opportunities for development. Along the corridor, and in surrounding areas, there are numerous signs of new and proposed development projects. (See **Figure 3**, *Issues and Opportunities Synthesis Map*)

### 2.2.1 Issues

1. The highest concentration of generally poor quality development in the corridor exists



**Figure 3** *Issues and Opportunities Synthesis Map - North*

in an area bounded by Lawrence Avenue and Waverly Street.

2. Numerous vacant buildings and abandoned properties have been foreclosed by the city.
3. The largest vacant parcel on the Avenue is the privately owned Kasenoff Bakery site between Maywood and Stanwood on the west side of Blue Hill Avenue.
4. The intersection at Quincy Street is the principal east-west connector between Warren Street and Columbia Road. Several significant vacant parcels frame this intersection.
5. Major infrastructure investments, including improvements to street and sidewalks, utilities, traffic controls, etc. - are necessary throughout the length of the Avenue.
6. The upper stories of existing multi-story mixed use buildings (first floor commercial and residential/offices above) are predominantly vacant.
7. The negative impact of crime and the real and perceived lack of safety.
8. Inadequate parking for both residential and commercial development.
9. The need for suitable options and prototypes for home ownership along the corridor.



10. The lack of employment and employment generating business along the corridor.
11. Involving local youth as part of the solution.

### **2.2.2 Opportunities**

Potential building blocks for the revitalization of the Avenue include:

1. The Mayor's publicly pledged commitment to the revitalization of this community.
2. The fact that the per capita income of this community can support greater retail development.
3. There is a significant amount of public (city) owned vacant land and some buildings along the length of the Avenue available for development.
4. The significant quality in the existing residential fabric particularly west of Blue Hill Avenue toward Warren Street.
5. Much of the existing architecture is of good quality and in some cases is of historic value.
6. While Grove Hall is a community wide recognized focal point of commercial activity, smaller neighborhood scaled commercial development is concentrated and thriving between W. Cottage and Woodville streets.
7. The Blue Hill Avenue/Dudley Street intersection is a growing focal point for institutional and commercial development.
8. There are several active development pro-

posals for privately and publicly owned vacant properties, including a comprehensive infrastructure development program slated for the Avenue. (See Appendix 3)

9. The proximity of large, quality open spaces, such as Franklin Park, the Franklin Park Zoo and Golf courses, represent a significant amenity for both residential and commercial development.
10. The multi-cultural nature of the population and the potential to introduce commercial and cultural facilities which reflect this diversity.

Significant opportunities for rebuilding the physical fabric of this community exist and in some cases have already begun, in spite of substantial adversity. The goal of the following chapters is to link many of these available opportunities into a comprehensive plan for revitalization.



***Rosa Parks Day Care Center***





*Grove Hall as Commercial Focal Point*



*Existing Residential Fabric*



*Franklin Park*



### **3. The Urban Design Vision**

In summary, this master plan seeks to redefine Blue Hill Avenue as a more residential corridor and capitalizes on cultural diversity as a principal marketing tool for introducing viable new commercial and employment-generating opportunities at strategic locations. This long range "vision" should accommodate existing businesses, residents and institutions as well as create opportunities for new people and activities. A future scenario could be the following:

- a. The new Blue Hill Avenue is a place of many faces and cultures.
- b. Grove Hall is the commercial and entertainment hub of the Avenue and offers a wide variety of goods and services (many with a distinctive ethnic flair). It is lively day and night and attracts visitors from throughout the metropolitan area.

- c. As we move down the Avenue, in the blocks between Stanwood and Lawrence, there are moderate density residential developments and revitalized mixed-use apartment buildings with commercial uses on the lower floors (stores and offices).

The "Pepper Pot" block is thriving as the result of an innovative renovation and it features the finest Caribbean restaurant in the city with long lines every night.

The First Haitian Baptist Church shares well lit landscaped parking lots with the increasingly busy retail uses in the area.

- d. Bus service is dramatically improved and distinctive new shelters add visual interest to the streetscape.
- e. The intersection of Quincy and Blue Hill continues as a major crossroads and is



*Grove Hall as a Commercial Hub*



*Improved Streetscape Treatment*

increasingly referred to as "Quincy Crossing". There are several new structures including a landmark apartment building, shops, and professional offices. Because of its close proximity to nearby shopping, Roxbury Comprehensive Community Health Center and the Walgreens, Quincy Crossing is an attractive location for the elderly who reside in the new complex too.

- f. The old Kasenoff Bakery site has been redeveloped with generous landscaping and a variety of housing types that take advantage of the topography and the vegetation. Some of the units are single family detached houses.
- g. On the PFD sites north of Quincy between Dove and Waverly Streets, a series of interesting side-by-side duplex homes have been constructed continuing the repopulation of the area with home owners.

- h. Several light industrial buildings continue to provide employment opportunities and they have been attractively renovated and landscaped. Some have been redesigned to provide "loft" living units that are particularly targeted to artists, musicians and young people.
- i. Open storage is not permitted and there are many innovative approaches to fencing commercial and industrial property.
- j. Many familiar commercial establishments have remained in the area but they have been recently renovated and have been brightly painted; many have new graphics and awnings. Even the old security gates have been replaced with decorative screens, or there are no screens or grates at all. With the presence of "Beat Cops," well known to the merchants and residents, and the many new residents living on the Avenue, coming



*Landmark Development at Quincy Crossing*



*Renovated Commercial Developemnt*



and going throughout the day and evening, issues of security and public safety are now sharply reduced.

- k. The resilient storefront buildings have been drastically altered for the expanded Pentecost Church and there is talk that there will be a new church built on the Avenue.
- l. Heading toward Dudley Street, the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative continues to build new housing as well as neighborhood oriented convenience stores.
- m. The sight and sounds of children playing and even the presence of teenagers with their strange dating ritual of strolling from one end of the Avenue to the other, recalls images of the city in years past.
- n. The Dudley Town Common is the northern "gateway" to Blue Hill Avenue and is a com-

bination of an old fashioned New England "town common" and the Caribbean Plaza. On weekends it's a bustling flea market with special performances. Nearby, institutional uses anchor this end of the Avenue with professional offices for lawyers, dentists and beauty shops.

The Dudley common is now the major gathering point for the annual Blue Hill Avenue Celebration, a popular event drawing visitors from all over. It is a must for aspiring politicians and residents anxious for leadership in the many social, service and business organizations with offices on Blue Hill Avenue, the "multi-cultural center of the city."



*Institutional Adaptive Re-use*



*Celebration at the "Dudley Town Common"*



### 3.1 Development Framework for the Avenue

The following framework for development responds to the general goals that were expressed at the outset of this planning process and described above in a futuristic "vision" of Blue Hill Avenue. The urban design framework presented in this section establishes a physical design context for guiding long-term decision making for the future of the area.

The Blue Hill Avenue Corridor has the potential to anchor a proud, historically significant and physically attractive inner city neighborhood. Building upon the cultural diversity and entrepreneurial spirit of the residents, the Avenue can become a significant destination for those in the metropolitan area who seek businesses, services and facilities with unique cultural flavors.

The Avenue can thus serve the needs of its residents while also attracting substantial outside visitors and shoppers. This will enhance the economic base of the neighborhood, provide new employment opportunities, create opportunities for entertainment and cultural exchange.

Reintroducing housing in a variety of building types ranging from single family homes to apartments, lofts and live / work environments can attract a diverse population ranging from the elderly to college students, artists and single adults. The result will be a community which is lively, safe and entertaining day and night, in short, a community of choice!

The physical design characteristics of the street, and the buildings which line it, vary throughout its length. Consequently, the overall urban design strategy is to reinforce existing positive design characteristics where appropriate and introduce new building types and forms where available parcels

offer development opportunities. Through streetscape design, guidelines for building massing and setbacks from the street, regulation of signage, architectural facade design and enforcement of rehabilitation standards, the ultimate objective is a street in which there is quality and design continuity but not uniformity. There should be architectural character reflective of the many cultures who will live, work and shop there.

Strategic interventions and design strategies must proceed on several levels simultaneously. At the macro level overall streetscape improvements, general public housekeeping and strategies for improving perceptions of public safety must be targeted for the entire Avenue. In parallel early action on specific parcels whether publicly or privately owned must be coordinated with the overall goals and long-term vision of the Avenue.

The intent must not be to unduly delay much needed investment and development but to make sure that new development is compatible with the urban design framework and the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Specific architectural assistance in the design of individual structures (including signage, displays, lighting and security grilles) should be made available to owners who want to make improvements to their properties and invest in additional properties. Assistance in obtaining funding for owners who want to develop and improve properties on the Avenue should be provided.

Although beyond the scope of this study, detailed guidelines and regulations for development on the Avenue should be codified and made available for prospective developers. Financial incentives should be utilized to encourage compliance with the thematic goals for the Avenue.

All current zoning and building codes should be rigorously enforced, sending the message to all that this is a community on the upswing with high standards. Those not choosing to adhere to those standards should look elsewhere to do business.

### 3.1.1 Urban Design Framework Plan

The principal objectives in the revitalization of the Avenue are:

- creating a safe and clean environment;
- establishing a desirable residential environment;
- promoting economic activity by generating jobs and opportunities for new business to develop;
- re-establishing the Avenue as a desirable and "unique" shopping district; and finally
- acknowledging the significance of this area's cultural diversity as a strength for development.

To accomplish these objectives it is necessary to consider a range of techniques or actions which will achieve the appropriate results. As shown in **Figure 4**, the Program Goals Matrix, these actions were developed in response to information gathered through the early stages of this planning study. They represent ideas derived from preceding plans for the area, as well as discussions with the Task Force and the other interested community representatives.

Many of the actions described in the Goals Matrix are taken directly from the community. Their input was provided during two intensive evening planning sessions held in the study area with Task Force

and community representatives. These actions were further categorized into three sub-groups:

- **Uses** - actions which affect the land-use distribution;
- **Streetscape** - actions which focus on physical improvements to public areas; and
- **Policy** - actions which serve to legally define or propose improvements programs for the benefit of the community at-large.

By focusing on the key impact actions within each sub-group we were able to form the basis for the Urban Design framework Plan.

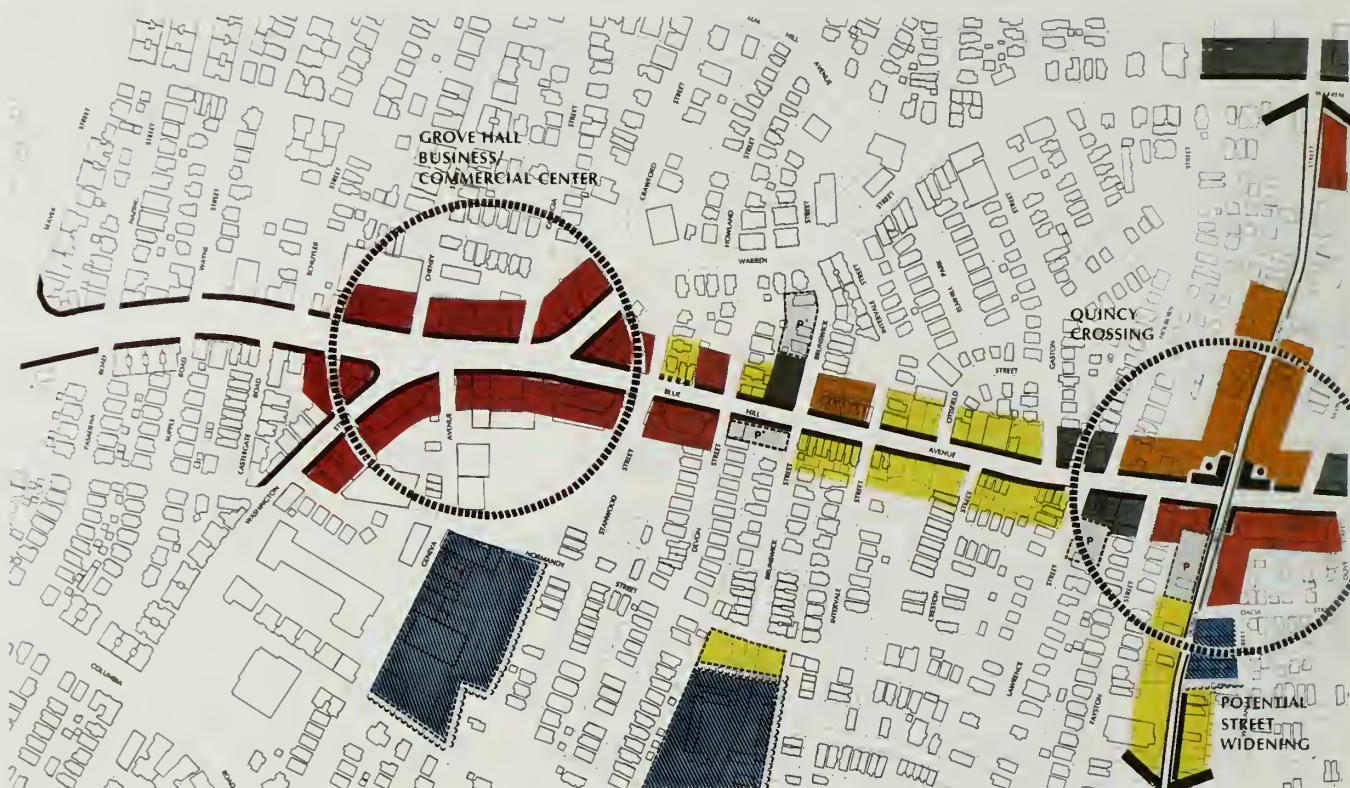


**Figure 4**      *Program Goals*

- ..... Direct impact on objective  
○ ..... Indirect impact on objective

OBJECTIVES	TECHNIQUES/ACTIONS				
	1	2	3	4	5
USES Land use distribution	1 ●	1 ●	1 ●	1 ●	1 ●
	2 ○	2 ●	2 ○	2 ●	2 ○
	3 ○	3 ○	3 ●	3 ●	3 ○
	4 ○	4 ○	4 ●	4 ●	4 ○
	5 ○	5 ○	5 ●	5 ●	5 ○
	6 ○	6 ○	6 ●	6 ●	6 ○
	7 ○	7 ○	7 ●	7 ●	7 ○
	8 ○	8 ○	8 ●	8 ●	8 ○
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	13 ○	13 ○	13 ●	13 ○	13 ○
	14 ○	14 ○	14 ●	14 ○	14 ○
	15 ●	15 ●	15 ●	15 ○	15 ○
STREETSCAPE Physical improvements	16 ○	16 ●	16 ○	16 ●	16 ○
	17 ●	17 ●	17 ●	17 ●	17 ○
	18 ●	18 ●	18 ●	18 ●	18 ○
	19 ●	19 ○	19 ●	19 ●	19 ○
	20 ●	20 ●	20 ●	20 ○	20 ○
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	22 ○	22 ●	22 ●	22 ●	22 ○
	23 ○	23 ○	23 ●	23 ●	23 ○
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	25 ●	25 ○	25 ●	25 ○	25 ○
	26 ●	26 ○	26 ●	26 ○	26 ○
	27 ●	27 ●	27 ●	27 ○	27 ○
	28 ●	28 ○	28 ●	28 ○	28 ○
	29 ○	29 ○	29 ○	29 ○	29 ○
POLICY Instruments/implementation	30 ●	30 ○	30 ○	30 ●	30 ○
	31 ●	31 ○	31 ●	31 ○	31 ○
	32 ○	32 ○	32 ●	32 ○	32 ●
	33 ○	33 ○	33 ○	33 ○	33 ●
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	35 ○	35 ○	35 ○	35 ○	35 ●
	36 ○	36 ○	36 ●	36 ○	36 ○
	37 ●	37 ○	37 ●	37 ○	37 ○
	38 ○	38 ○	38 ○	38 ●	38 ○
	39 ○	39 ○	39 ○	39 ○	39 ○
	40 ○	40 ●	40 ○	40 ○	40 ○





**Figure 5** Urban Design Framework Plan

The Urban Design Framework Plan (see **Figure 5**), at a general level, recommends strategic actions to achieve the "vision" of a new Blue Hill Avenue. Proposed actions relate to the overall Program Goals described in Figure 4, and are as follows:

#### Uses - Land Use Distribution

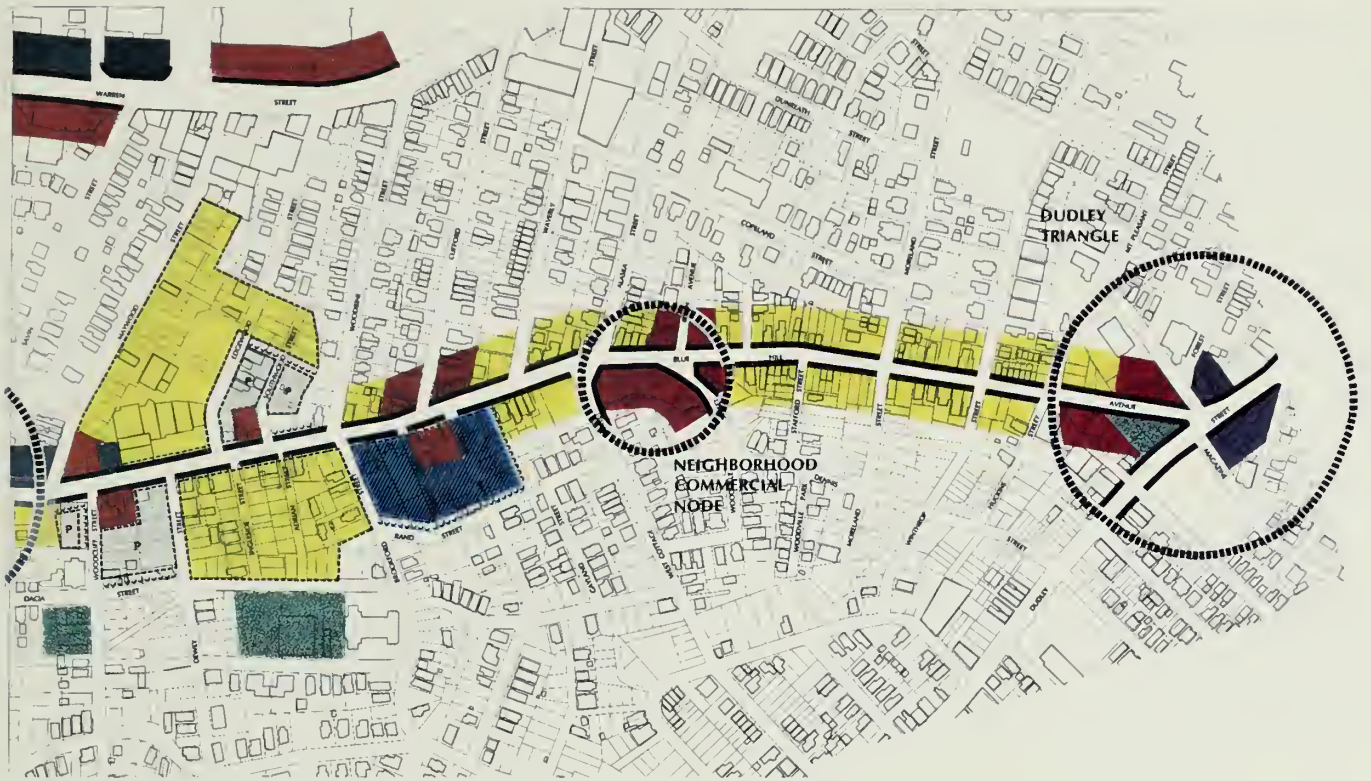
1. Reinforce existing patterns of residential development along the corridor.
2. Establish commercial nodes at Grove Hall (regional), at W. Cottage and Woodside Streets (neighborhood/local); and mixed-use (institutional/commercial) development at Dudley Street, and at Quincy Street (high profile commercial/residential).
3. Retain viable commercial development along the Avenue.

4. Reinforce strong commercial nodes at strategic locations by relocating existing marginal retailers when feasible.
5. Locate new parking for non-residential uses off the Avenue in limited strategic locations.
6. Introduce high profile mixed-use development at the Quincy Street intersection.
7. Identify sites for employment generating uses, i.e., incubator office spaces

#### Streetscape

8. Reinforce the existing streetscape with right-of-way improvements and guidelines consistent with the intended improved character of Blue Hill Avenue.
9. Provide appropriate screening between residential and non-residential uses.





**Figure 5** Urban Design Framework Plan

### Legend

	COMMUNITY ACTIVITY NODE
	STREETWALLS / STREETScape DEFINITION
	GATEWAY FEATURE
	BUFFER TREATMENT
	MAJOR CROSS STREET
	PARKING
	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE
	RESIDENTIAL
	COMMERCIAL
	INDUSTRIAL
	INSTITUTIONAL
	MIXED USE

The framework objectives for Land Use focus on reinforcing the existing residential pattern and improving the physical quality of the neighborhood in order to increase opportunities for retaining and attracting residents to this community. Once this is accomplished the atmosphere improves dramatically for the introduction of strategically located commercial, institutional and mixed use development. Achieving this initial objective will require the development of strategies for parking and the need to mitigate the relationship between non-compatible uses.

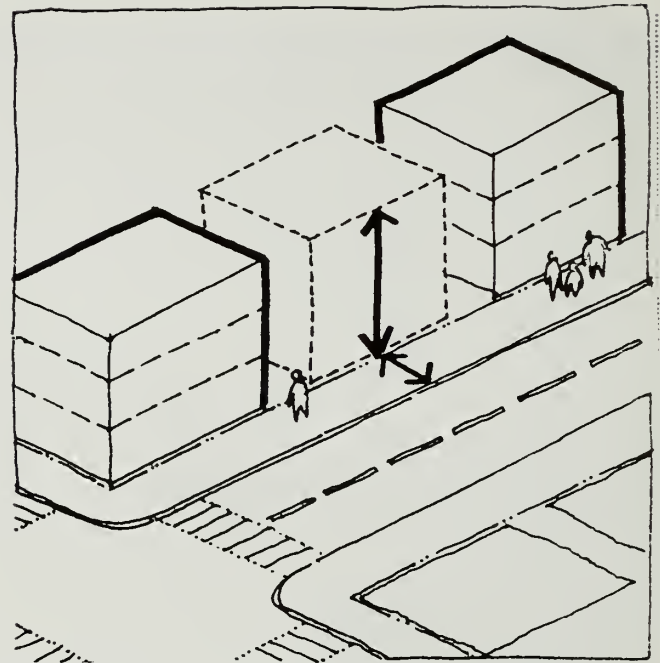
The streetscape objectives address the overall need to improve the "face" of the Avenue beginning with the public infrastructure. It also acknowledges that this must occur in concert with specific treatment to existing buildings along the Avenue.

### 3.1.2 General Urban Design Guidelines

Because each zone has unique characteristics, it is important that general guidelines be established at the outset, that promote a consistent level of quality design intervention. These guidelines should reflect current and anticipated community needs for achieving the overall urban design objectives of this plan. They must also be practical and clear in their applicability, to be useful for intended redevelopment efforts.

#### General Fabric

1. Setback patterns, building heights and massing for new development should be sensitive to existing buildings and siting conditions.
2. New commercial or institutional development should not only conform to local codes and zoning requirements, but also be properly sited and designed so as to provide a sense of compatibility and improve the character of the neighborhood. Parking and servicing must be designed and managed to minimize impacts to pedestrian movement and neighboring residential development.
3. Evaluate and retain "historically" valuable structures; provide incentives for upgrading and improvements. Buildings such as the Rosa Parks Day Care Center, the Haitian Baptist Church, and several historic homes represent the history of the Avenue and provide the desirable references for residents and visitors to the area.
4. Promote the use of design elements and building facades which enhance the pedestrian character of the Avenue. Facade treatment should maximize window area. Awnings, signage and security features, such as metal grates, should not be obtrusive, rather they should be integrated into the



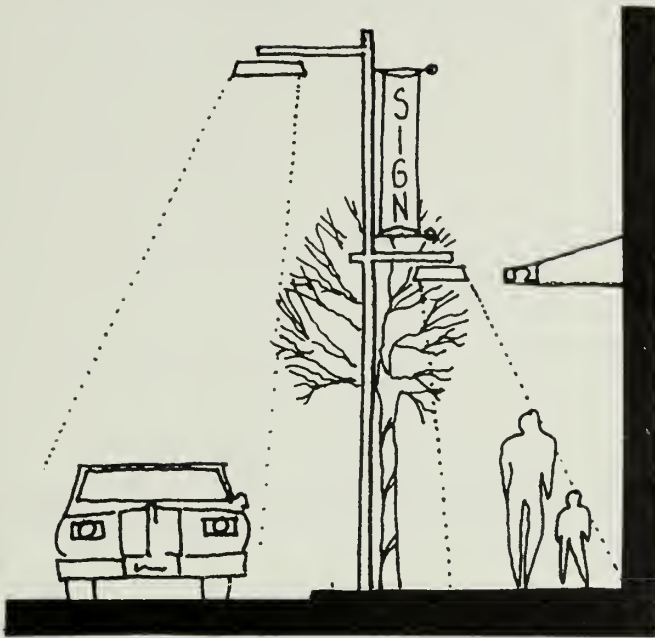
**General Fabric - Maintaining Height & Setback**

overall design character of the building. Materials, colors and design elements should be compatible or complementary with other buildings on the street and subject to design review. Residential development should reinforce basic urban characteristics; the use of stoops and bays, for instance, establishes a familiar and friendly urban pattern at the street level for both pedestrians and residents.

#### Streetscape

1. Consistent and appropriate street furniture i.e., lighting, signage, paving and landscaping treatment which is scaled to pedestrians should be introduced along the Avenue. Opportunities should be considered to incorporate sidewalk areas for outdoor cafes and as gathering spaces for residents, shoppers and other visitors to the area.
2. Treatment of the streetscape environment





***Streetscape - Coordinated & Consistent Furnishings***

(lighting, the location of bus shelters, etc.) should contribute to improved security along the Avenue. Care should be given to avoid the use of elements that are too defensive or unfriendly in appearance.

3. Distinguish key nodes and places with the use of unique variations of the basic streetscape treatment along the rest of the Avenue. These special considerations may include changes in lighting standards, the introduction of pedestrian crosswalks, and/or special paving treatments. Such places and treatments should be the exception rather than the rule in order to have general continuity throughout the Avenue.

### **Traffic / Parking**

1. Develop new traffic controlling initiatives which improve pedestrian safety. These may take the form of signalization systems which reduce the speed of vehicular traffic along the Avenue.

2. Design access drives and parking so that the automobile is conveniently sited but not dominant on a site. Whenever possible parking needs should be accommodated within property lines with adequate lighting and security features. Landscaping and or decorative fencing is encouraged.
3. Non-residential parking should be located to minimize the impact of large numbers of parked cars. They should be located either to the rear of buildings or to one side, allowing the building full frontage on the street. The use of landscaping to buffer large lots should be encouraged. Generally, avoid locating parking at street corners where they have maximum visual impact. There may be limited exceptions to this rule as noted in the plan. In those cases very strict guidelines should be observed which include extensive landscape design elements.



***Parking - Locate to Minimize Curb Cuts & Screen Accordingly***



***Parking - Use of landscaping to minimize visual impact***

4. Minimize the number of curb cuts directly onto Blue Hill Avenue or any other high volume streets. Priority should be given to locating parking access so as to avoid unnecessary conflicts with either vehicular or pedestrian traffic movement. Similarly, avoid locating new curb cuts in close proximity with existing curb cuts.

These strategic actions are further defined in the Urban Design Framework Initiatives (see **Figure 6**), and categorized as actions which will either involve land use distribution or primarily affect specific physical characteristics of the Avenue. It is important that many of these actions be applicable and relevant to definitive areas and conditions. It is our conclusion that the most appropriate way to direct these actions is to focus them within zones, defined by either consistent or dominant physical characteristics, along the Avenue. (See **Figure 7, Zone Subdivision Chart #1.**)

The Zone Subdivision Chart identifies six distinctive segments along Blue Hill Avenue: Dudley, Winthrop to Woodville Streets, Woodville to Dove Streets, Quincy Crossing, Fayston to Devon Streets, and Grove Hall. The evaluation of each zone is limited to fundamental issues of overall character, land use, building type/condition, landmarks, and traffic/parking considerations.

Using these parameters, descriptions of the qualities which establish each zone's unique character and/or dominant feature are contrasted with proposals for specific actions that can be applied to achieve the overall objectives of this plan. The goal, or potential, for each zone is described within the context of the larger Avenue, but with some recognition of the zone's individual strengths and weaknesses. (See **Figure 8, Zone Subdivision Chart #2.**)



**Figure 6**      *Urban Design Framework Initiatives*

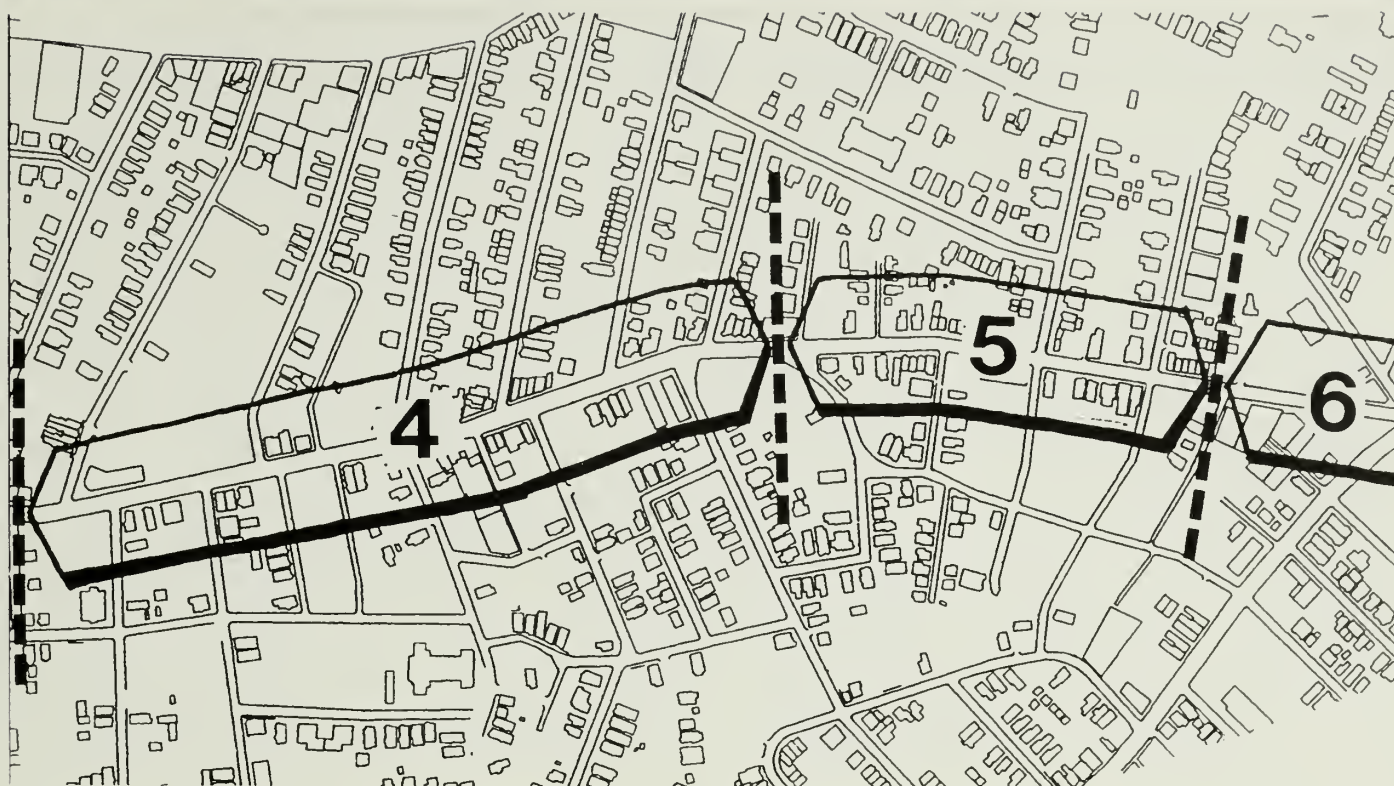
		OBJECTIVES				
		Creation of a safe and clean environment	Desirable residential environment	Increased economic activity and job opportunities	A desirable and "unique" Shopping District	Manifestation / representation of cultural diversity
		1	2	3	4	5
		● . . . . . Direct impact on objective	○ . . . . . Indirect impact on objective			
		PROPOSED ACTIONS				
USES Land use distribution	<b>Residential uses:</b>					
	1 Provide a variety of housing types:	○	●	○	○	●
	2 ■ South of Quincy: multifamily mixed use; i.e. office/resid. over retail	○	●			
	3 ■ North of Quincy: 1-2 bedroom multiple units	○	●			
	4 ■ At Quincy Crossing: multifamily mixed use development	○	●			
	<b>Commercial uses:</b>					
	5 Concentrate primarily around natural nodes:		○	●	●	
	6 ■ South of Quincy Street	○	○	●	●	
	7 ■ Unique commercial development at Quincy Crossing		○	●	●	○
	8 ■ Grove Hall area should be a focus of commercial activity		○	●	●	
	9 Introduce night life to BHAve (food, recreation, etc.)	●		●		
	<b>Other uses:</b>					
	10 Incorporate new institutions that provide jobs	○		○	○	
NON-LAND USE SPECIFIC Physical environment	11 Provide a training center or incubator facilities for new businesses	○		●		
	12 Provide additional parks as required; close to (but not on) BHAve	○	●			○
	13 Designate sites along Geneva Ave. for new light industrial developments			●		
	<b>Streetscape:</b>					
	14 Improve security (especially security perception) through design elements:	●	●	●	●	○
	15 ■ Provide a pedestrian oriented environment along BHAve	●	●	○	●	
	16 ■ Introduce trees and greenery to BHAve; Improve lighting	●	●		○	
	17 ■ Carefully integrate Bus Stop design into streetscape treatment	○			○	○
	<b>New parking:</b>					
	18 More parking: long term off BHAve; and short term on BHAve	○	●			○
	19 Break down large parking areas into small parking lots	●	○		○	
	20 Access to all new parking areas will be off side streets	○	○			
	<b>Cultural enhancement:</b>					
	21 Emphasize cultural activities; Pride through Culture:	●	○			●
	22 ■ Encourage art production and display throughout the area	○				●
	23 ■ Establish review process to approve murals and public art				○	○
	<b>Others:</b>					
	24 Link BHAve with Franklin Park and the Zoo					○
	25 Save all historically/architecturally significant structures		○		○	○
	26 Specific buildings can be designated for demolition if required	●				



		<b>ZONE 1</b> Grove Hall	<b>ZONE 2</b> Devon - Fayston	<b>ZONE 3</b> Quincy Crossing
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>A Character</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Key commercial node and BHA gateway; Tough for pedestrians to negotiate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Unique massing conditions with strong and uniform character for a few blocks, abruptly interrupted by vacant lots/bldgs.;</li> <li>● Vacant upper storey uses prevail.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sparse/vacant, yet well maintained.</li> </ul>
	<b>B Predominant uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Primarily commercial;</li> <li>● Some institutional development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commercial/residential mix;</li> <li>● Much vacant land and buildings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Vacant; commercial use.</li> </ul>
	<b>C Bldg. type/condition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Primarily one-two storey; a few multi-storey mixed use;</li> <li>● Fair/good condition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Three storey, mixed use;</li> <li>● one storey commercial/institutional;</li> <li>● Fair/poor condition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● One storey;</li> <li>● Fair condition.</li> </ul>
	<b>D Landmarks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Silva Bldg., Georgia St. Church, Bethlehem Bible Center.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● First Haitian Baptist Church;</li> <li>● Family Life Center, Multi-service Center. Gang Peace;</li> </ul>	N/A
	<b>E Traffic/parking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Congested/problematic intersection which requires careful consideration;</li> <li>● Parking primarily on-street, additional parking will be needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No major intersections;</li> <li>● Institutional parking at Holburn.</li> <li>● Traffic light at Intervale intersection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Busy intersection, compounded by gas station egress/access;</li> <li>● No parking issues;</li> <li>● Traffic light at intersection.</li> </ul>

Figure 7 Zone Subdivision Chart & Map - Existing

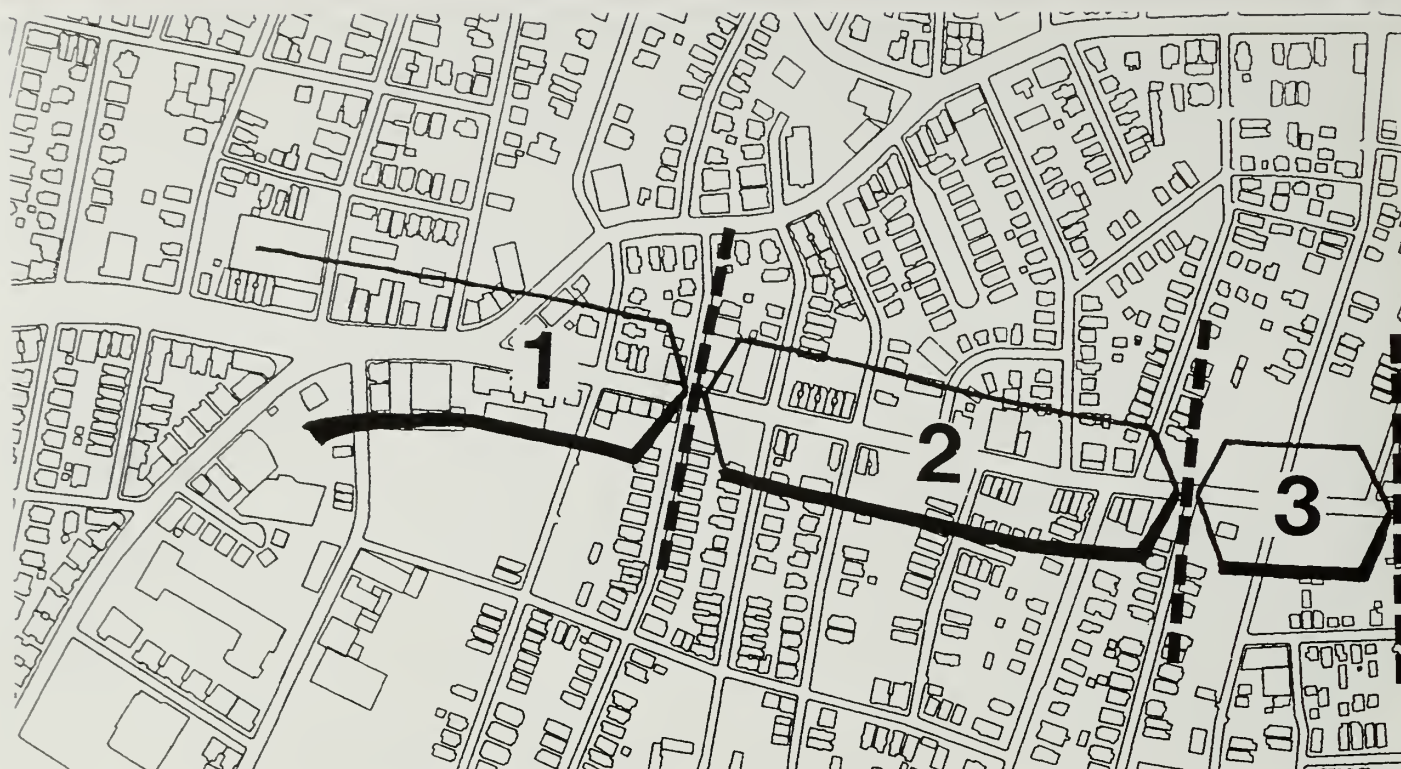




ZONE 4 Dove - Woodville	ZONE 5 Woodville - Winthrop	ZONE 6 Dudley		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discontinuous streetscape and streetwall;</li> <li>High degree of deterioration in buildings and sidewalks;</li> <li>Numerous vacant lots and bldgs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent space/massing; impacted by vacant parcels and new development;</li> <li>Narrow right of way for both pedestrians and vehicles;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active, viable retail center;</li> <li>Lacks continuity in massing and scale.</li> </ul>	A Character	DESCRIPTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial/residential mix; two churches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial and Institutional.</li> </ul>	B Uses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One storey commercial and multifamily housing;</li> <li>Fair/good condition (except for northern end between Julian and Woodville)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Townhouses and multifamily apartments;</li> <li>Three storey masonry;</li> <li>Fair/good condition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One storey masonry;</li> <li>Fair/good condition.</li> </ul>	C Bldg. type/condition	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rosa Parks Building; Swifty auto shop.</li> </ul>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dudley Commons; La Alianza bldg., St. Patrick's.</li> </ul>	D Landmarks	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No pkg. lots; off street pkg. for housing;</li> <li>Yard parking for Swifty;</li> <li>Problematic traffic/parking at Woodville.</li> <li>Traffic light at West Cottage intersection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No key intersection; no parking lots.</li> <li>Poor maneuverability along narrow street with on-street parking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Congested intersection;</li> <li>Minimal pedestrian accommodation;</li> <li>Municipal parking lot.</li> </ul>	E Traffic/parking	

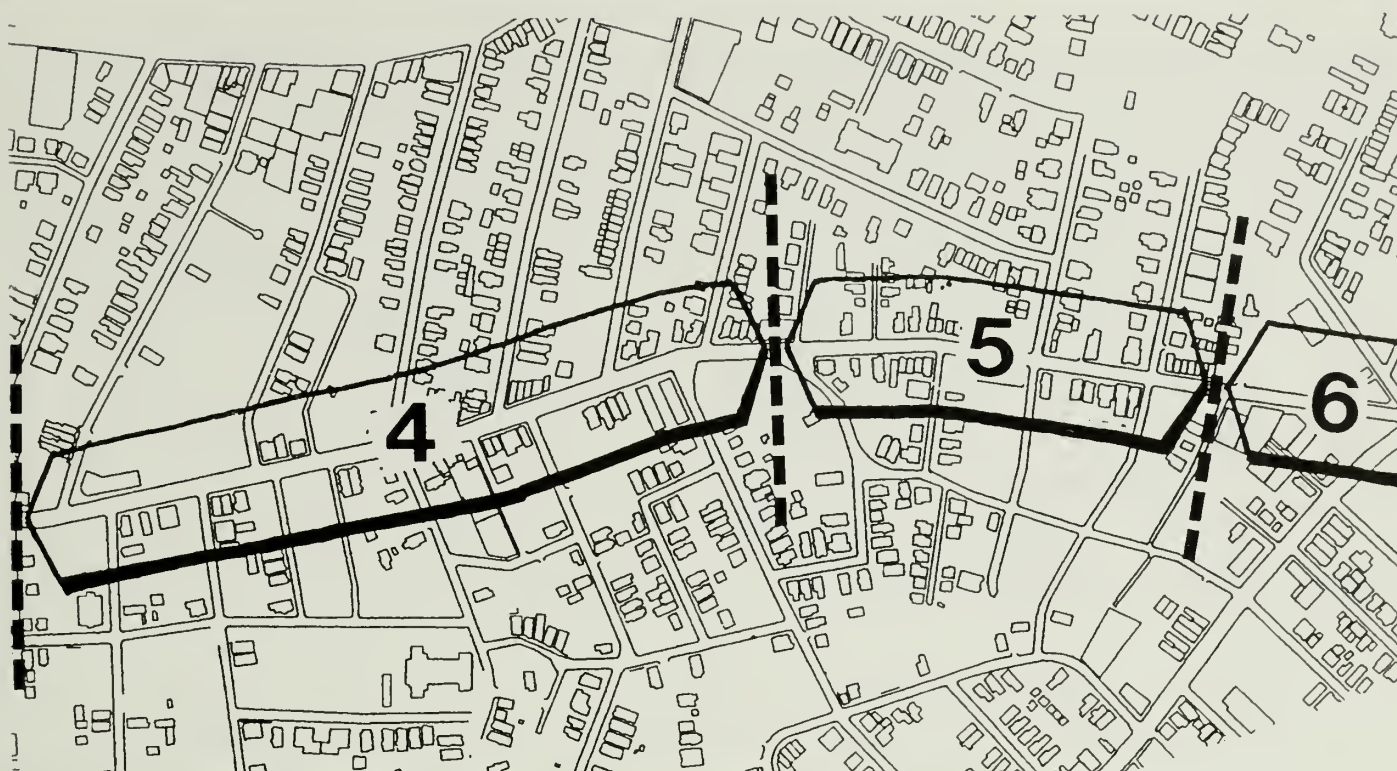
**Figure 7** Zone Subdivision Chart & Map - Existing





		<b>ZONE 1</b> <b>Grove Hall</b>	<b>ZONE 2</b> <b>Devon - Fayston</b>	<b>ZONE 3</b> <b>Quincy Crossing</b>
<b>DEVLPT GOAL</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Potential to introduce unique commercial/retail opportunities reflecting the varied ethnicities of the avenue;</li> <li>● Establish regional commercial attraction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Potential to capitalize on strategic location between Grove Hall and Quincy Crossing, as active commercial / residential development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Key intersection with significant and varied development opportunities.</li> </ul>
<b>PROPOSED ACTIONS</b>	<b>A Character</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reinforce existing commercial character to fullest capacity;</li> <li>● Introduce distinct streetscape amenities to further define the node.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reinforce streetwall and overall massing w/introduction of new multifamily bldgs;</li> <li>● Articulate new facades so as to complement/ be compatible with existing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A vibrant node and landmark as midpoint between Dudley and Grove Hall;</li> <li>● Pedestrian feature to mark intersection.</li> </ul>
	<b>B Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintain prevailing uses; give special consideration to Geneva/Stanwood site for new light industrial or commercial uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reinforce/maintain prevailing uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mixed uses (primarily resid./commercial)</li> </ul>
	<b>C Bldg. type</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Extend existing character/type.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduce multi-storey, mixed use (resid. over retail/residential; office over retail);</li> <li>● Consider adaptive reuse of existing multi-storey buildings for the above.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Multi-storey residential and mixed-use development at the intersection, two-family, single family residential down Quincy Street</li> </ul>
	<b>D Landmarks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Proposed Grove Hall Mall</li> </ul>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● New multi storey bldgs. at intersection.</li> </ul>
	<b>E Traffic/parking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clearly delineate traffic movement, both pedestrian and vehicular;</li> <li>● Introduce off-street parking (possibly structure?) for commercial uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide residential parking on-site;</li> <li>● Locate 3 small lots (10,000 sf) distributed along BHA to serve commercial uses and multi-storey buildings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Modify traffic patterns, i.e.: lighting sequence, to minimize impacts;</li> <li>● Designate on-site parking for new developments.</li> </ul>

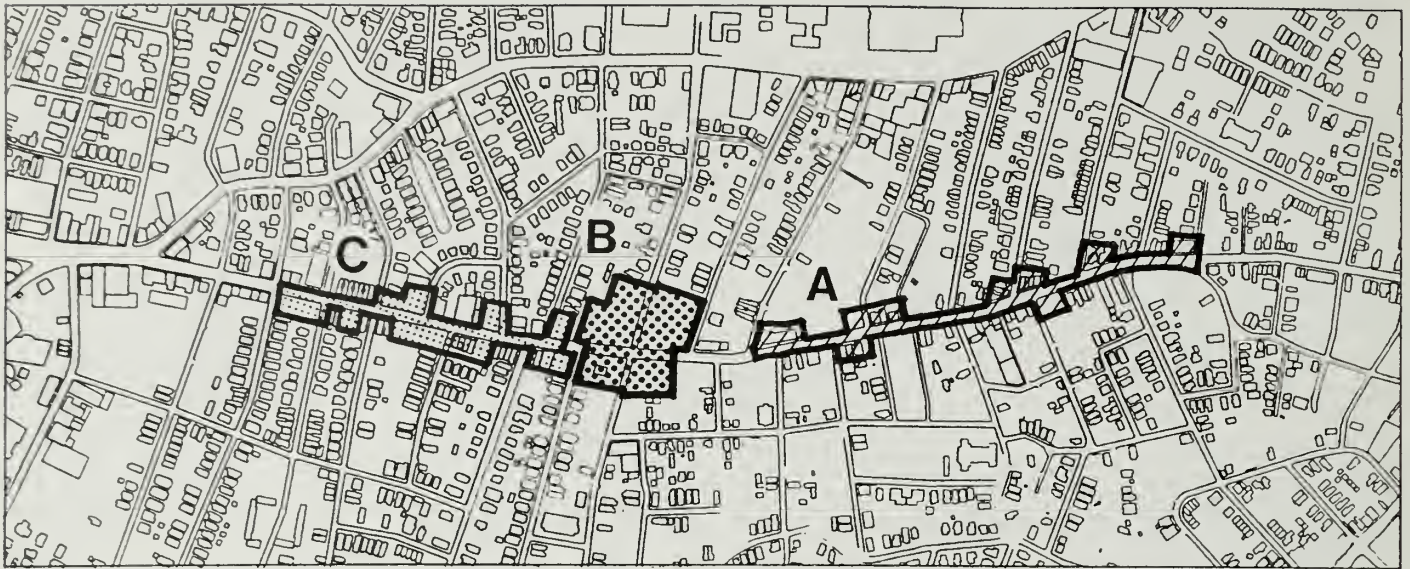
**Figure 8** Zone Subdivision Chart & Map - Proposed



ZONE 4 Dove - Woodville	ZONE 5 Woodville - Winthrop	ZONE 6 Dudley		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential to become a varied residential strip with local, neighborhood-scaled commercial development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential to become a more uniform residential strip.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Important gateway and northern anchor for BHAVE.</li> </ul>		DEVLPT GOAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledge anchoring potential of Rosa Parks and an improved Swifty site.</li> <li>Increase continuity of built fabric between the two anchors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitive treatment of new building fronts (streetwall) and streetscape (landscaping, signage, lighting, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve continuity in massing/scale;</li> <li>Enhance streetscape amenities to improve quality of environment.</li> </ul>	A Character	PROPOSED ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforce/maintain prevailing uses; Introd. of new residential as primary goal;</li> <li>Consider recreational uses for the Fairbury Street building such as: bowling alley or movie theater.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforce/maintain prevailing uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforce/maintain prevailing uses.</li> </ul>	B Uses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce varied residential types (and scales).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend existing character/type.</li> <li>Maintain the prevailing scale of multi-storey development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend existing character/type.</li> <li>Maintain the prevailing scale of multi-storey development</li> </ul>	C Bldg. type	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New "landmark" use for existing Fairbury Street Garage (recreation/commercial)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed Dudley Commons</li> </ul>	D Landmarks	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconfigure traffic/parking at Swifty;</li> <li>Provide on-site parking for residential;</li> <li>Introduce small parking lot for special uses as determined by design.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designate only off-avenue access to all parking lots when possible;</li> <li>Clearly define pedestrian crossings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve traffic pattern at intersection;</li> <li>Define clear pedestrian movement zones;</li> <li>Designate only off-avenue access to all parking lots when possible.</li> </ul>	E Traffic/parking	

**Figure 8** Zone Subdivision Chart & Map - Proposed





**Figure 9** Location Map - Specific Interventions

### 3.2 Urban Design Case Studies

This section applies the urban design principles (Section 3.1) to specific instances. The selected sites, or projects, are representative of strategic investment opportunities. These examples are developed as typology studies to illustrate what might be done elsewhere on the Avenue.

**Case Study A (Zone 4 - Woodville -Dove):** This is an area recommended for new residential development. The potential is also there to revitalize existing neighborhood commercial development. The proposed intervention focuses on redevelopment of these existing commercial facilities. Many of the principles illustrated are applicable to existing and new development including multi-story, mixed use facilities.

**Case Study B (Zone 3 - Quincy Crossing):** This is

a key intersection and there is an opportunity to introduce new development of substantial scale on these prominent sites. We therefore chose to illustrate potential development options to anchor this important node.

**Case Study C (Zone 5 - Fayston - Devon):** This is the most distressed zone along the Avenue due to the large number of vacant sites, vacant buildings and the generally poor quality of the existing building stock. It is also unique because of the presence of a large number of viable multi-story, mixed use buildings. This intervention explores development prototypes utilizing infill multi-story structures similar in scale and character to the existing context.





**Figure 10** *Distribution of Potential Buildings to be Modified*

### 3.2.1 Case Study A

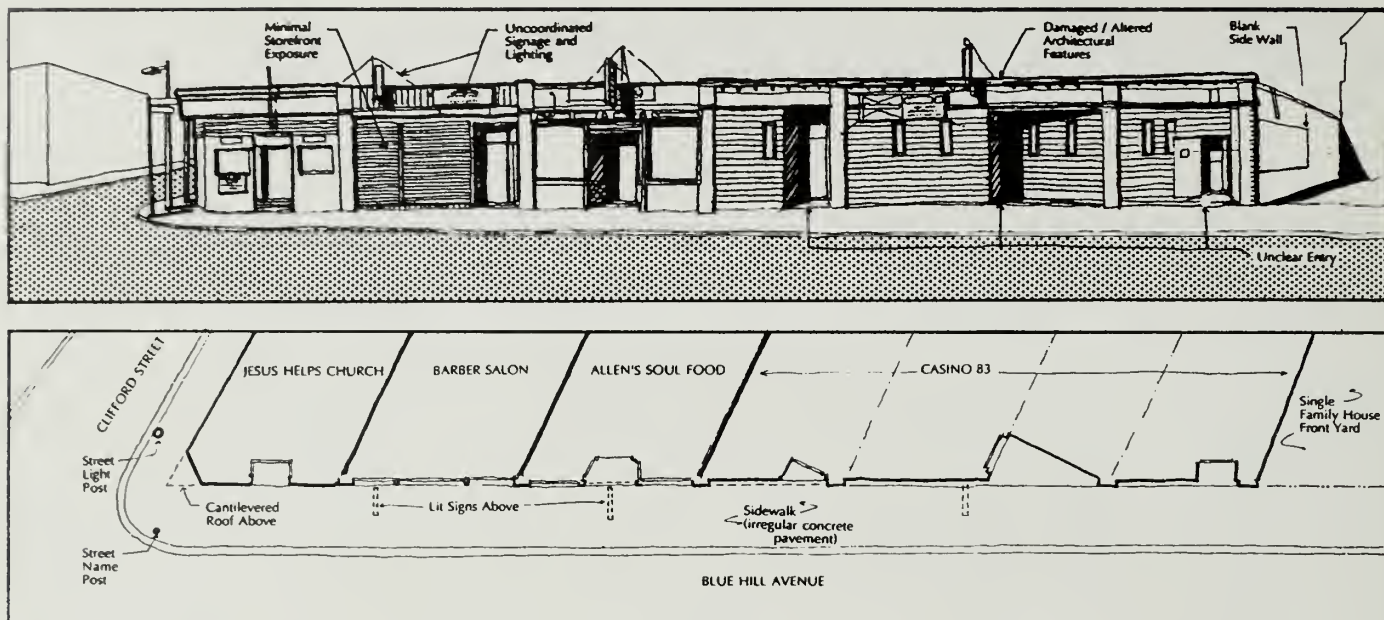
This study illustrates adaptable guidelines for both existing and new commercial development. The retail development at the corner of Blue Hill Avenue and Clifford Street was chosen as an example, typical of several retail facilities that exist in the Woodville - Dove zone and in other places on the Avenue. The location of other one-storey retail development where the type of physical intervention represented in these diagrams can be applied is shown in **Figure 12**, *Distribution of Potential Buildings to be Modified*.

These principles, however, are meant to be applicable to a variety of situations ranging from new free standing commercial projects to ground-level commercial uses in multi-story buildings. Implementation of these general strategies will require the initiative of property owners in coordi



**Typical Commercial Renovation**

nation with the tenants, as well as the active involvement of the public agencies.



**Figure 11** Existing Retail Building

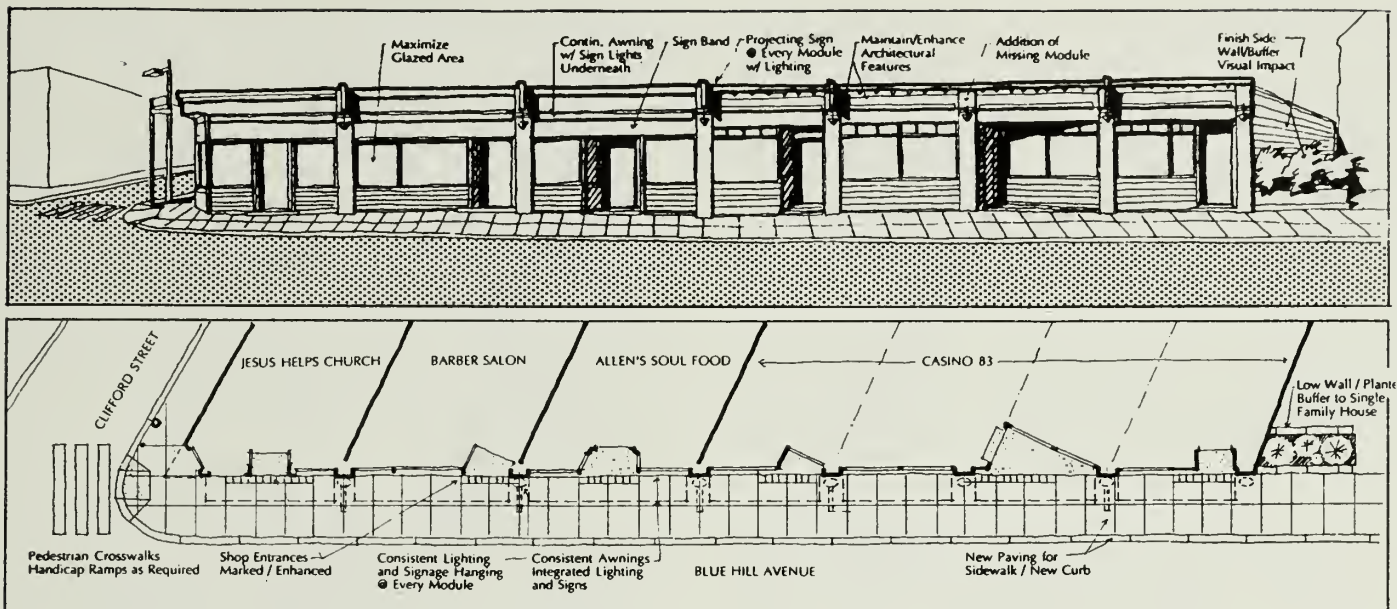
The following describes the interventions necessary to successfully rehabilitate the selected structure (refer to **Figure 11**, *Existing Retail Building*, and **Figure 12**, *Proposed Changes for Building and Streetscape*):

1. General upkeep of the property, including clean-up, maintenance and repair as required. This should include the exterior face of the building and the immediate streetscape environment, including: sidewalk paving, curb-cuts, lighting, furnishings, landscaping, etc.
2. Removal of all non-compatible and visually intrusive elements from the facade, such as: inappropriate signage, banners, antennas, opaque metal grates, etc.
3. Careful integration of new components into the overall look of the building. These com-



**Existing Commercial Use**





**Figure 12** *Proposed Changes for Building and Streetscape*

ponents include: new signage fixtures, security features (grills, screens, etc), lighting, access to the stores, awnings, etc. A set of design guidelines should be developed to insure the compatibility of all these elements including materials, colors, ornaments, etc. When possible, store front window area should be maximized.

4. Where appropriate, the original architectural character of the building should be maintained, restored and/or enhanced. Where elements of good visual quality are present (i.e. ornaments, details, patterns) every effort should be made to treat them with care.
5. Visual screening should be applied to mitigate intrusive conditions, i.e.: service/parking areas, adjacent residential uses, blank side walls, etc.



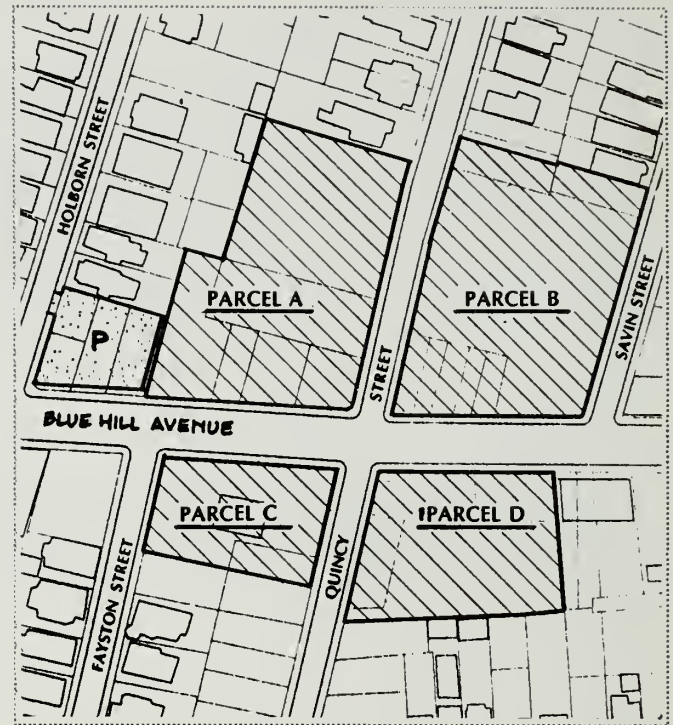
*Proposed Commercial Renovation*



### 3.2.2 Case Study B

As noted previously this is a key node within the study area because of the volume of traffic which passes through this intersection and the relatively large vacant parcels at three of its four corners. It is also a direct through street and key link between Warren Street and Columbus Avenue.

The options studied for this site illustrate important development parameters that will preserve the potential of Quincy Crossing as a prominent visual place. These parameters include definitive guidelines for service, parking and open space features. In addition, these guidelines acknowledge and address the relationship between these sites and adjacent uses.



**Figure 13** Quincy Crossing Parcels

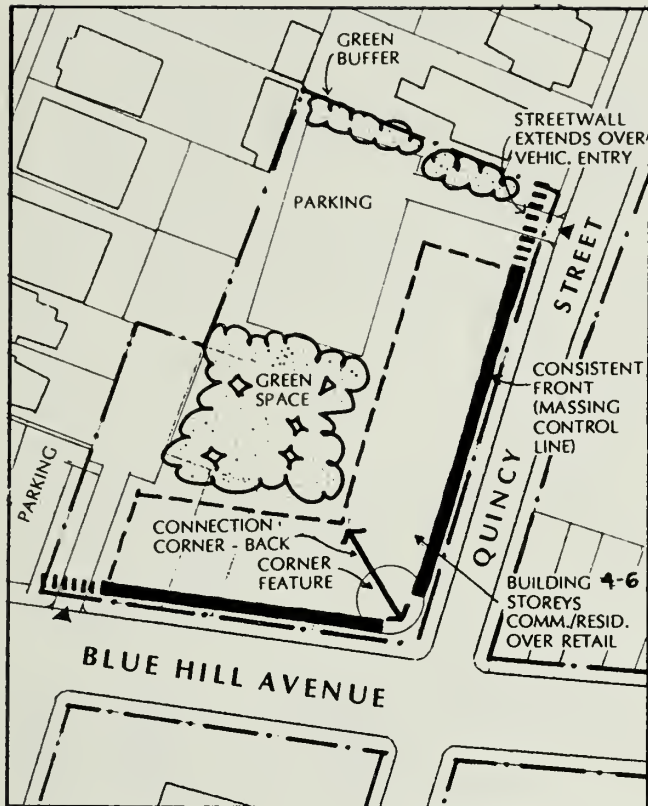


*Quincy Crossing Today*



Blue Hill Avenue...A Community Vision

Stull and Lee, Inc.  
Date: Jan 1996



**Figure 14** Parcel A - South west corner

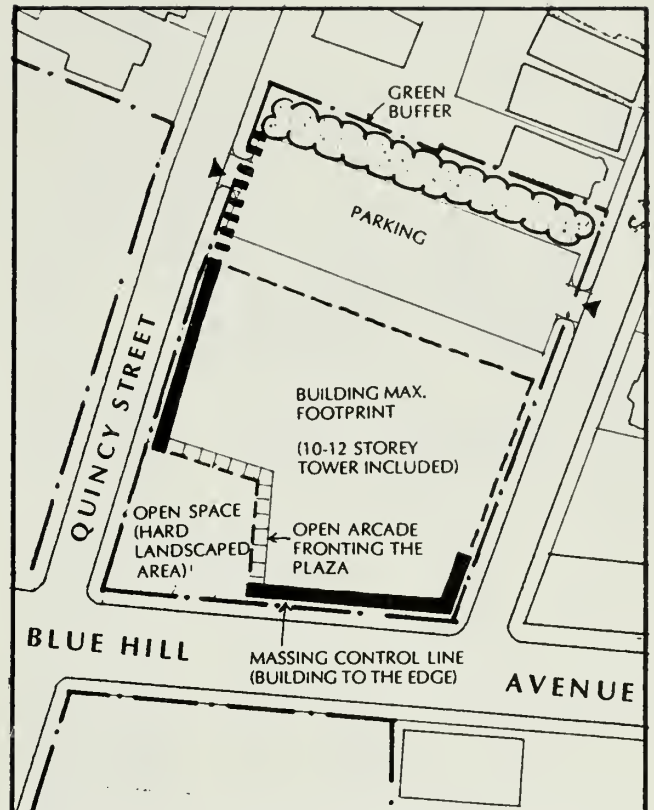
#### PARCEL A

**Use:** Office/Residential on upper floors; Retail at ground level. Open space feature for residential use at rear.

**Massing:** Six storey maximum. Edges aligned with streetwall on both sides. Enhanced feature at corner.

**Access:** Continuous pedestrian entries along sidewalks; major entry at corner.

**Parking:** Main residential parking off Quincy Street; service/retail parking area off Blue Hill Avenue. Screen/buffer between parking and adjacent uses.



**Figure 15** Parcel B - North west corner

#### PARCEL B

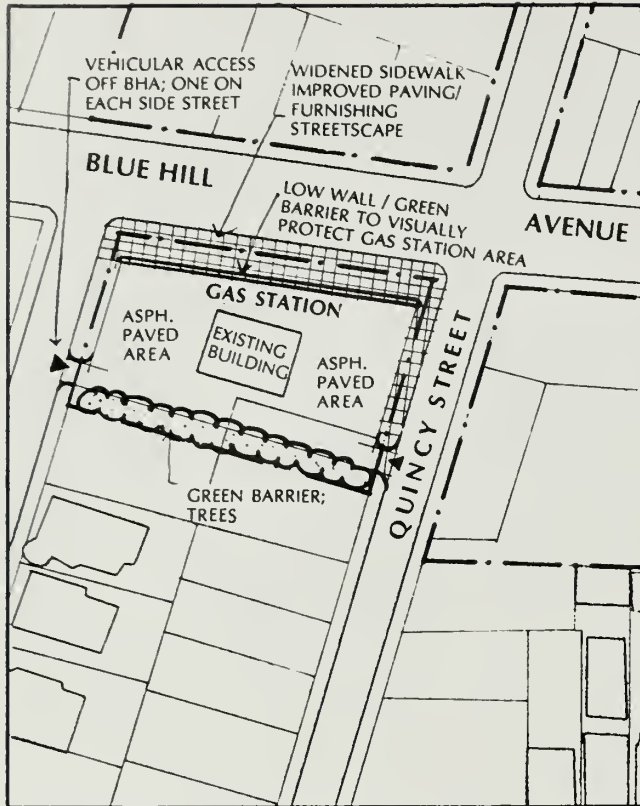
**Use:** Institutional/Residential on upper floors; Retail/Institutional at ground level. Hard surfaced open space feature ("plaza") at corner.

**Massing:** One/two storey base with 10 storey max. tower above. Edges aligned with streetwall, open arcade defines plaza.

**Access:** Continuous pedestrian entry along Blue Hill Avenue; major entry at corner. Residential entry from parking at rear.

**Parking:** Main parking area off Quincy and Savin Streets. Screen/buffer between parking and adjacent uses.

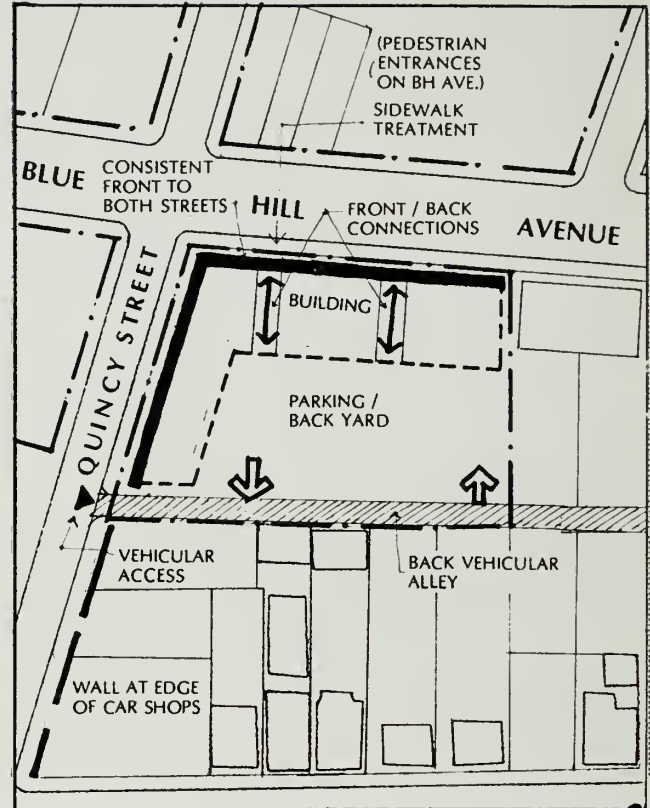




**Figure 16** Parcel C - South east corner

### PARCEL C

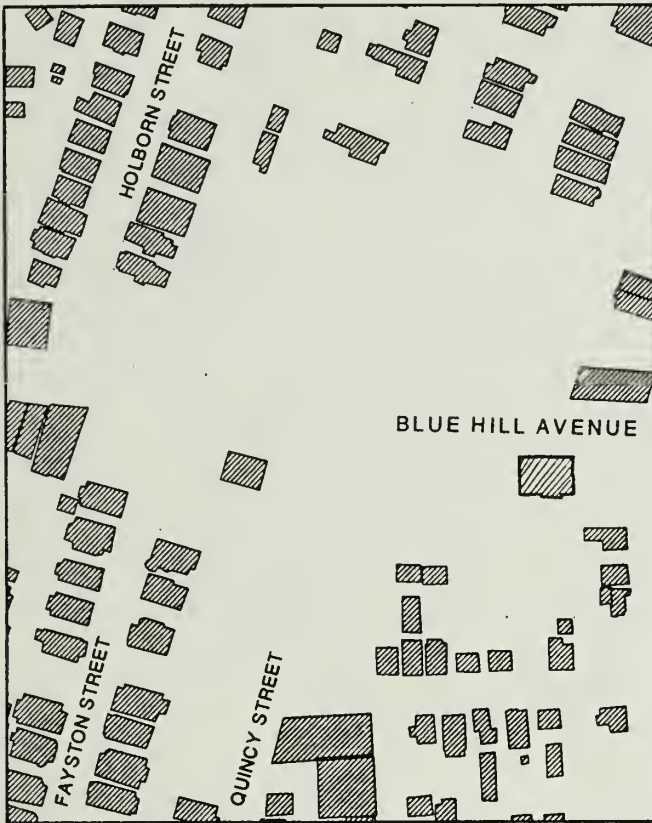
- Use:** Gas Station (existing use).
- Massing:** Maintain/upgrade existing building. Streetscape improvements along Blue Hill Avenue: sidewalk widened, screen or low wall delineates sidewalk, with landscaping as required.
- Access:** Vehicular access pattern altered; entry only from Quincy and Fayston Streets.
- Parking:** Service station area separated from adjacent residential area through green buffer.



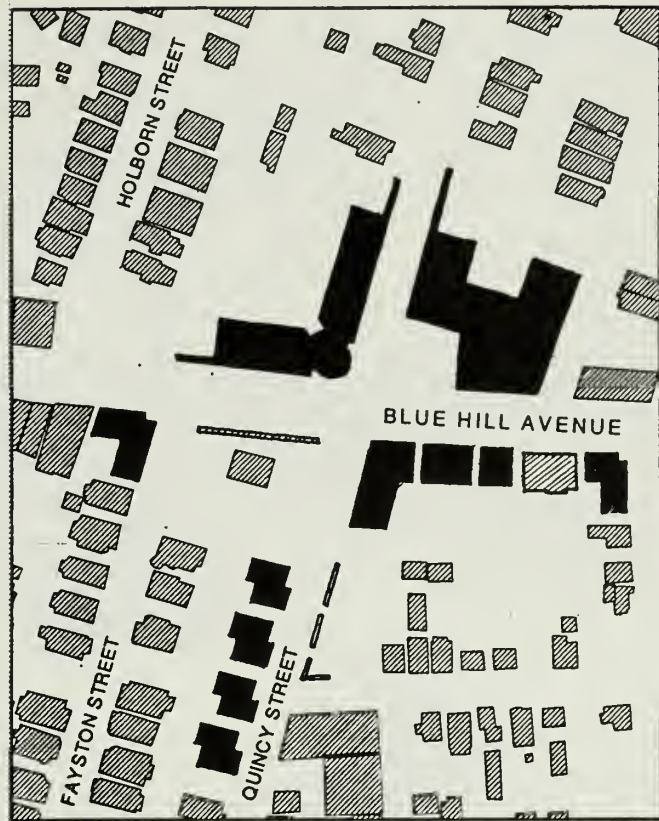
**Figure 17** Parcel D - North east corner

### PARCEL D

- Use:** Office on upper floors; Retail/Service area at ground level.
- Massing:** Two/three storey maximum. Edges aligned with streetwall on both sides. Service area at rear.
- Access:** Continuous pedestrian entry along retail edges; new vehicular access/service alley opened at rear between Quincy and Dove Streets.
- Parking:** Parking/service yard area at rear, with access off proposed alley only. Pedestrian connections between parking area and Blue Hill Avenue.



**Figure 18** Existing Figure-Ground



**Figure 19** Proposed Figure-Ground

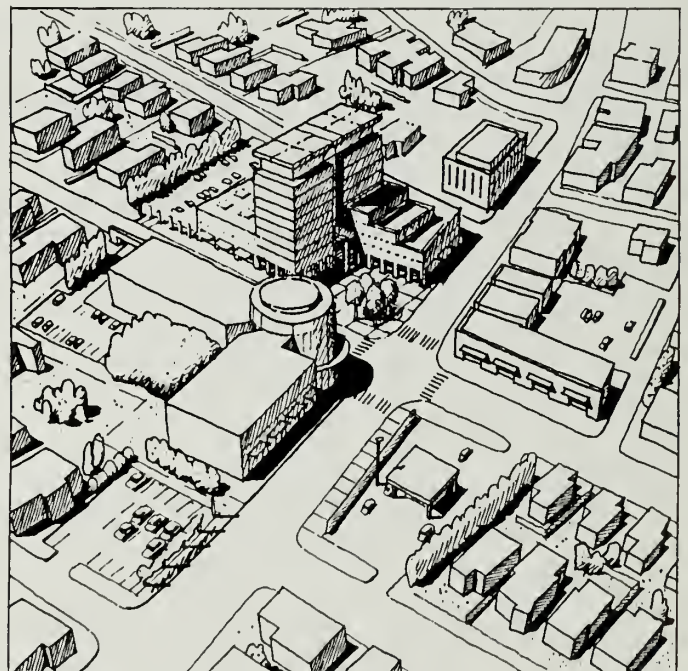
The application of the above mentioned guidelines will reinforce the general guidelines for the Avenue as presented in previous chapters by:

- a. Further developing the notion of a strong and continuous urban environment for the Avenue. **Figure 19, Proposed Figure-Ground**, represents in plan view, the impact of full development to define the edges of Quincy Crossing.
- b. Creating a nodal development at this key location by providing the necessary link between the southern and northern sections of the Avenue.





**Figure 20** Sketch at Quincy Crossing - Street Level



**Figure 21** Massing Sketch



**Figure 22** Zone 5 - Existing Conditions

### 3.2.3 Case Study C

The objective for this zone is to develop an active residential/commercial link between Grove Hall and Quincy Crossing. The design approach firmly establishes a consistent streetwall through massing and setback controls.

This zone contains a disproportionate number of vacant buildings and vacant sites. The remaining fabric is unique in the number of 3- to 4-story buildings which dominate the streetwall, but is in varied states of disrepair.

Due to the remarkable architectural quality of most of these buildings, a two-track strategy will be required:

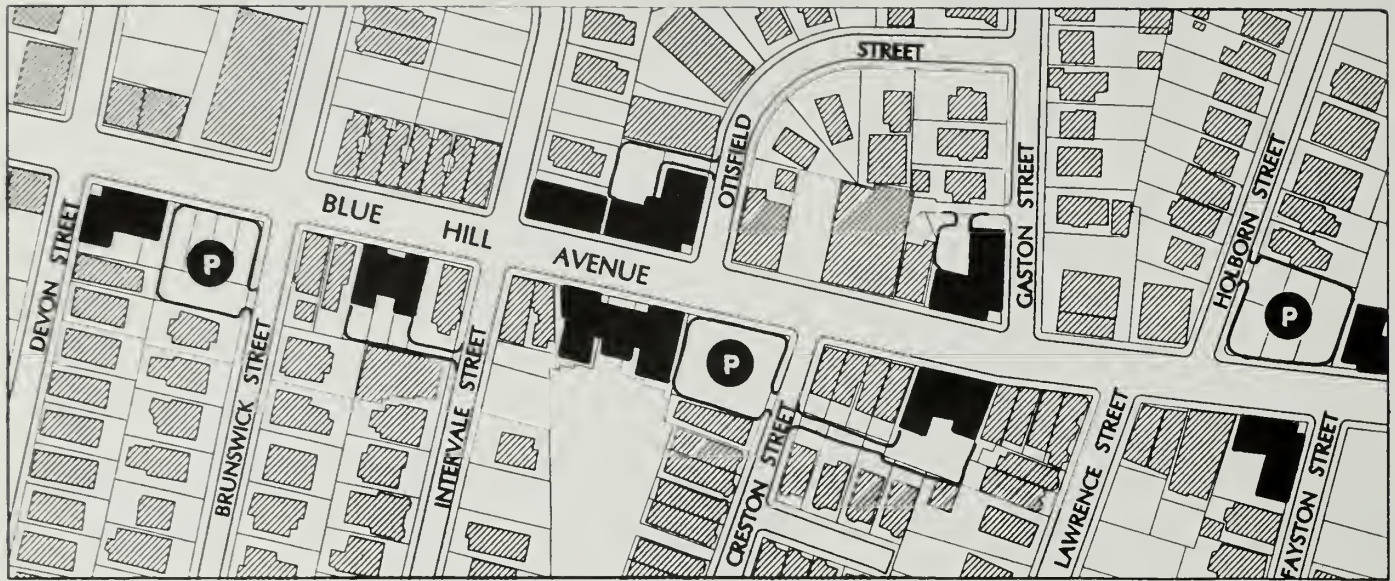
- a. **Existing Buildings:** The restoration/rehabilitation of each worthy structure should be encouraged. It is recommended that residential uses be reintroduced to the upper floors, with the possibility of some commercial

offices as well. Wherever possible and feasible, retail uses should occupy ground levels, as they enrich the sidewalk and encourage pedestrian activity. When physical restoration is involved, particular care should be given to the architectural characteristics of the original building.

- b. **New Buildings:** As seen in **Figure 22: Zone 5 - Existing Conditions**, there is a large number of vacant properties on the area. In many cases these buildings were 3 and 4 story uses (see historic photos...). Therefore, these guidelines will propose the introduction of new mixed-use, infill development that can be adapted to varying site conditions.

**Figure 23: Zone 5 - Proposed Buildings and Parking Lots**, shows the potential distribution of these new buildings within the zone, along with the retail related parking lots to be discussed later in this chapter.





**Figure 23** Zone 5 - Proposed Buildings and Parking Lots

**Figure 24:** Proposed Building Type, describes the basic principles that define the proposed type, as applied to the site on Blue Hill Avenue between Intervale and Brunswick Streets. The application of these principles will need to be modified to fit the particular conditions of other sites. The varying site conditions that will impact the specific building design include: configuration of the lot (size, shape), adjacent conditions, relation to streets (mid-block or cornerlot), etc.

In general, residential parking will be located on site, with vehicular access from side streets in the case of corner lots. Where possible, mid-block lots (like the one described on **Figure 24**) should be connected via side streets through an access alley at rear of the site.

The two alternative sections shown in Figure 24 show the design of either residential or retail uses at the ground floor level. The same model could be adapted to locate office uses on the upper floors.



**Typical Existing Condition**

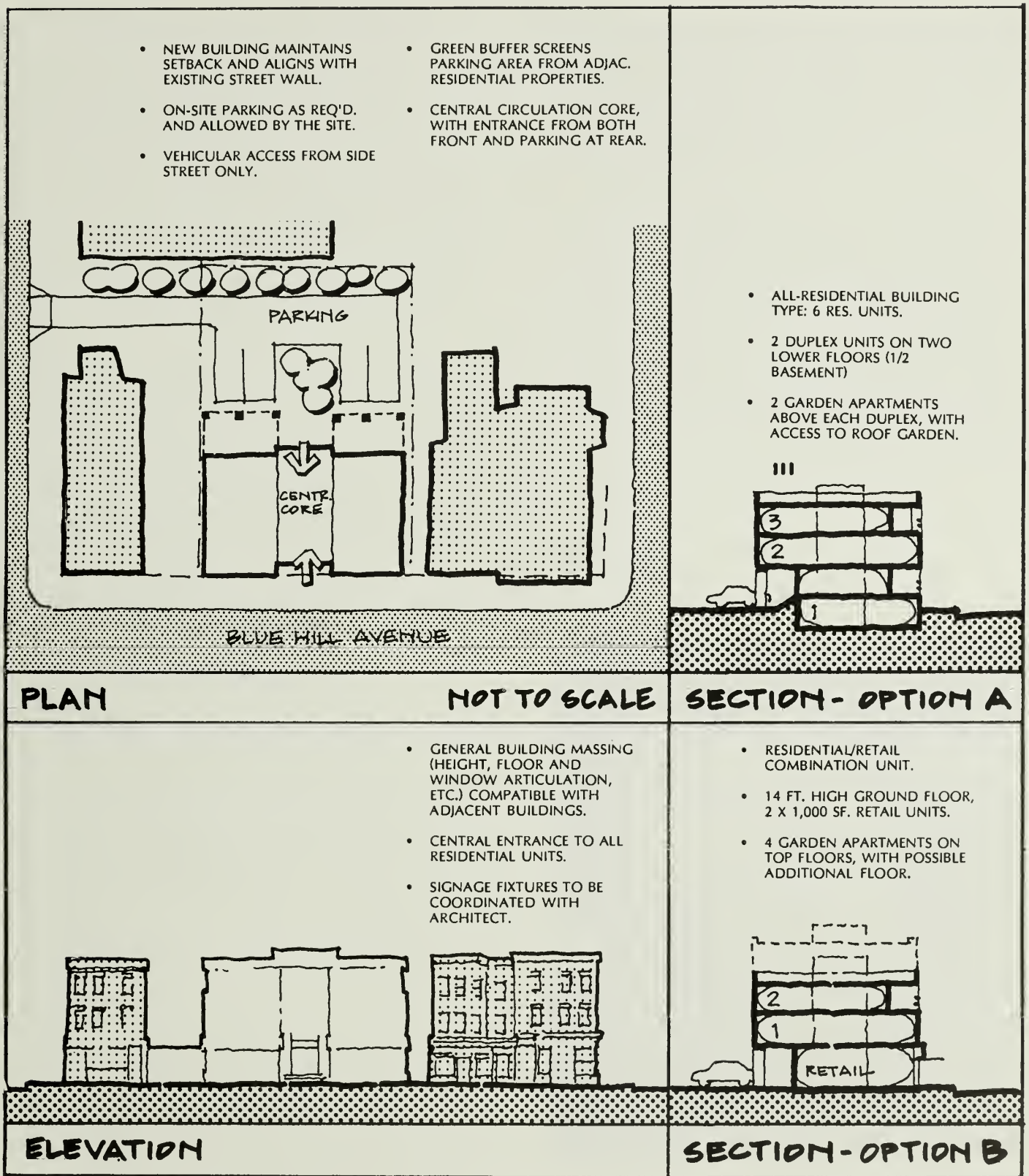


Figure 24 Proposed Building Type



Design guidelines created specifically for this zone should make sure that the architecture of these new buildings is compatible with its overall character. In particular, the guidelines should address issues of massing, height, materials, fenestration, retail signage, screening devices, etc.

In addition to on-site parking areas for residential uses, the retail-parking will be served by three designated parking lots (see **Figure 23**). Access to these lots (located at the corners of Blue Hill Avenue with Brunswick, Creston and Holborn Streets,) will be from the side streets, allowing for fewer curb cuts and uninterrupted sidewalk treatment along Blue Hill Avenue. This parking strategy addresses the projected needs of the zone.



*Proposed Infill Option .*

### 3.3 Phasing

The redevelopment of Blue Hill Avenue will require a specific sequence of incremental actions over a defined period of time to improve the existing physical and economic environment. This section identifies a sequence of short term actions designed to achieve these objectives. Section 4 outlines specific roles to be played by the private sector, the public sector and the community as part of the long term strategy for revitalizing this community.

The recommended short term actions are aimed at stabilizing manageable portions of the Avenue through high visibility interventions to improve the marketability of property and businesses on the Avenue. The short term strategies will highlight existing strengths, and newly planned projects within the focus area.

The phasing described below recommends targeted areas and actions for the first phase.

#### Phase One- Short Term Actions

The Phase One actions represent achievable short term (3 to 5 years) goals for Blue Hill Avenue consistent with the overall vision defined in this Report. Specific locations for proposed actions are diagrammed in **Figure 25** the *Phase One Action Plan*. Recommendations for this phase emphasize the following:

1. *Eliminate blighting conditions wherever possible.*

Enforce measures by which blighting conditions along the Avenue are mitigated either by the City or the offending property owner. Code enforcement, coordinated city services, or community clean-up events should be considered. Sites of dilapidated vacant housing along

the Avenue should be appropriately cleaned and sealed. Boarded-up windows may be treated with painted scenes as a mitigation measure.

2. *Infrastructure improvements along the entire Avenue.*

Revisit the approved infrastructure redevelopment plan for Blue Hill Avenue to ensure its compatibility with the Urban Design framework. For instance, improvements to pedestrian crosswalks, lighting, signage and landscaping that are consistent with the accepted guidelines should be incorporated prior to initiation of this proposed scope of work. Standardized elements should be used to establish a minimal level of continuity along the Avenue.

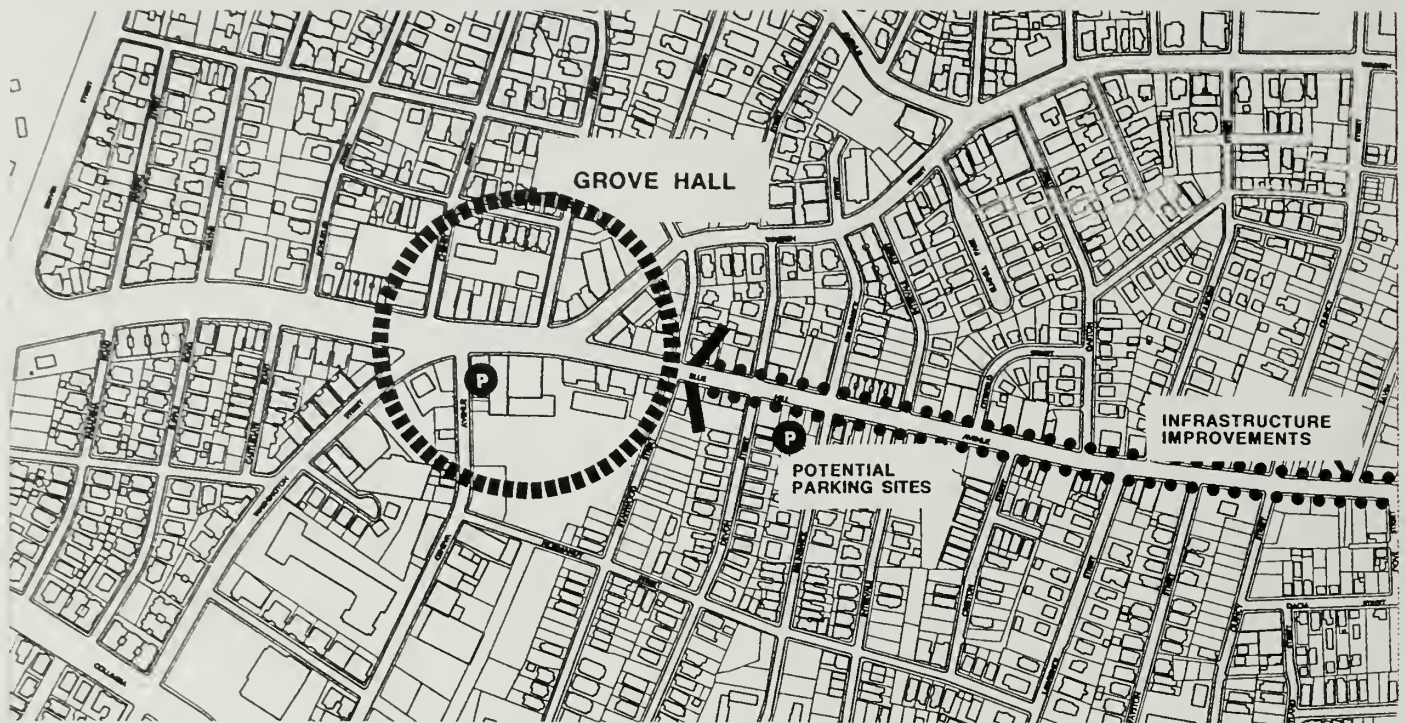
3. *Thematic treatment at the two entry nodes for the Avenue.*

Develop a display of “thematic” banners, signage, and or lighting at Grove Hall and Dudley/Blue Hill. The emphasis here should be on creating notable entry points for this segment of Blue Hill Avenue. Special consideration should be given to cultural diversity as a principal design motif.

4. *Improvement of existing commercial uses at key nodes: Grove Hall, Dudley/Blue Hill and Woodville/Blue Hill.*

Consideration should be given to incorporating the design initiatives outlined in Section 3.2.1, by providing assistance to the owners of viable commercial buildings. Renovation efforts within these three nodes will strategically link proposed new development with improvements to existing uses (See Appendix 3). Recommended improvements include new awnings, coordinated signage, and lighting, which will empha-





**Figure 25** Phase One Action Plan

size ground floor retail uses. The presence of “refurbished” facades at these locations, in particular at Dudley and at Woodville, are important initial steps in the revitalization of these nodes.

5. *Initiation of affordable housing development on City owned properties along the Avenue.*

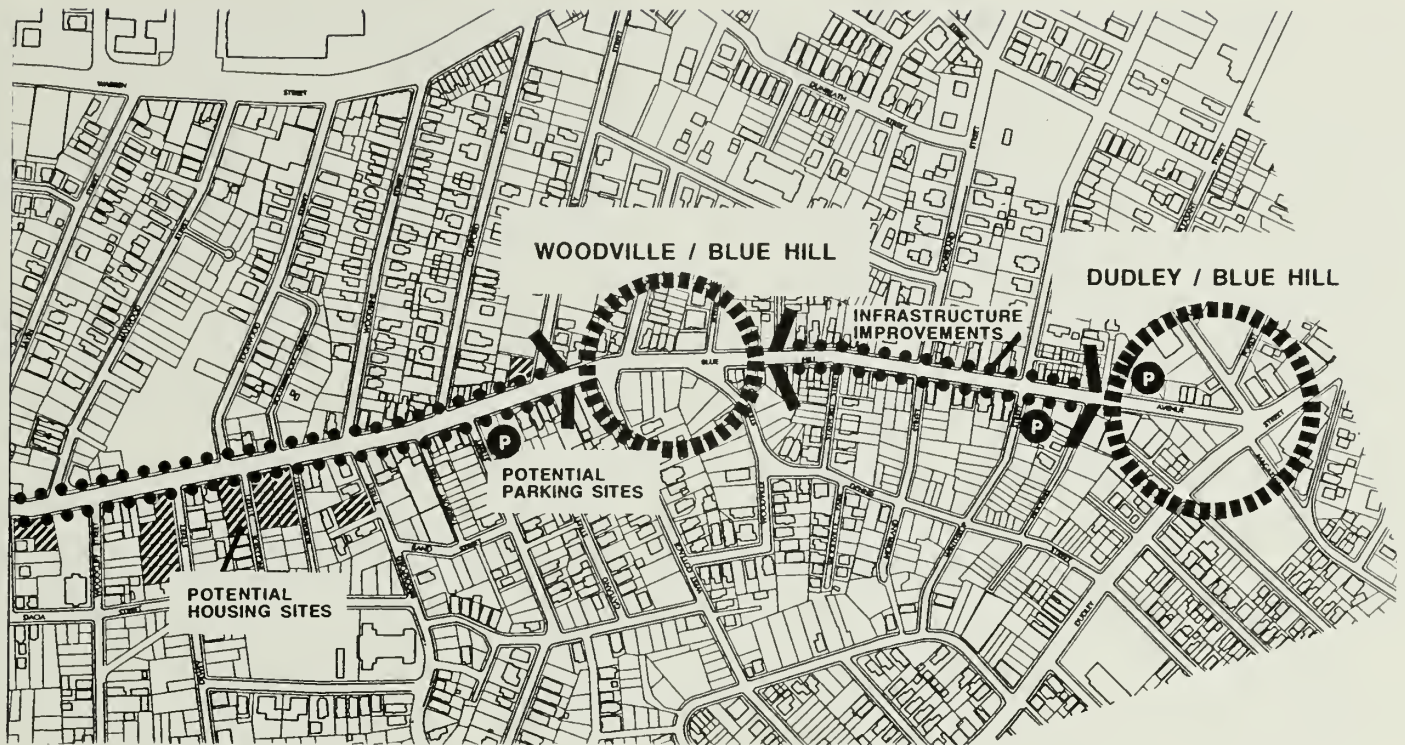
Targeted housing development will eliminate a number of the vacant parcels scattered along the Avenue and provide increased residential and employment opportunities within the community. Several sites have already been designated for development by the PFD and await final selection of a developer.

6. *Develop an interim strategy for commercial parking along the Avenue.*

The creation of interim parking lots will require the further study of parking demands for existing and proposed near term development projects. The likely candidates for these lots will be strategically located on city-owned vacant parcels. Interim use as parking lots should also include a management plan for security and maintenance consistent with guidelines defined in Section 3.1.2. Designation of long-term parking - lots and multi-story structures - should be studied in more detail based on the specific development needs.

7. *Develop a creative and aggressive marketing strategy and promotional campaign for Blue Hill Avenue.*

Create a focused and polished marketing tool, describing the core components of the plan,



**Figure 25** Phase One Action Plan

that can be widely distributed. The information should include but not be limited to:

- data on available sites for acquisition, i.e., size and current value;
- the type and quantity of desired development;
- the amount of significant infrastructure improvements underway including, i.e., parking, lighting, landscaping, etc.;
- the relationship of proposed development activity on Blue Hill Avenue to development elsewhere in Boston.

Long term actions will address the more problematic areas and generally will require substantial new physical and financial investment. To implement the long term actions within reasonable time frames it will be necessary to make those areas a high priority, with particularly strong involvement from the City, the Task Force and the residents.





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## **Appendix 1 -** PFD Existing Land Use Maps





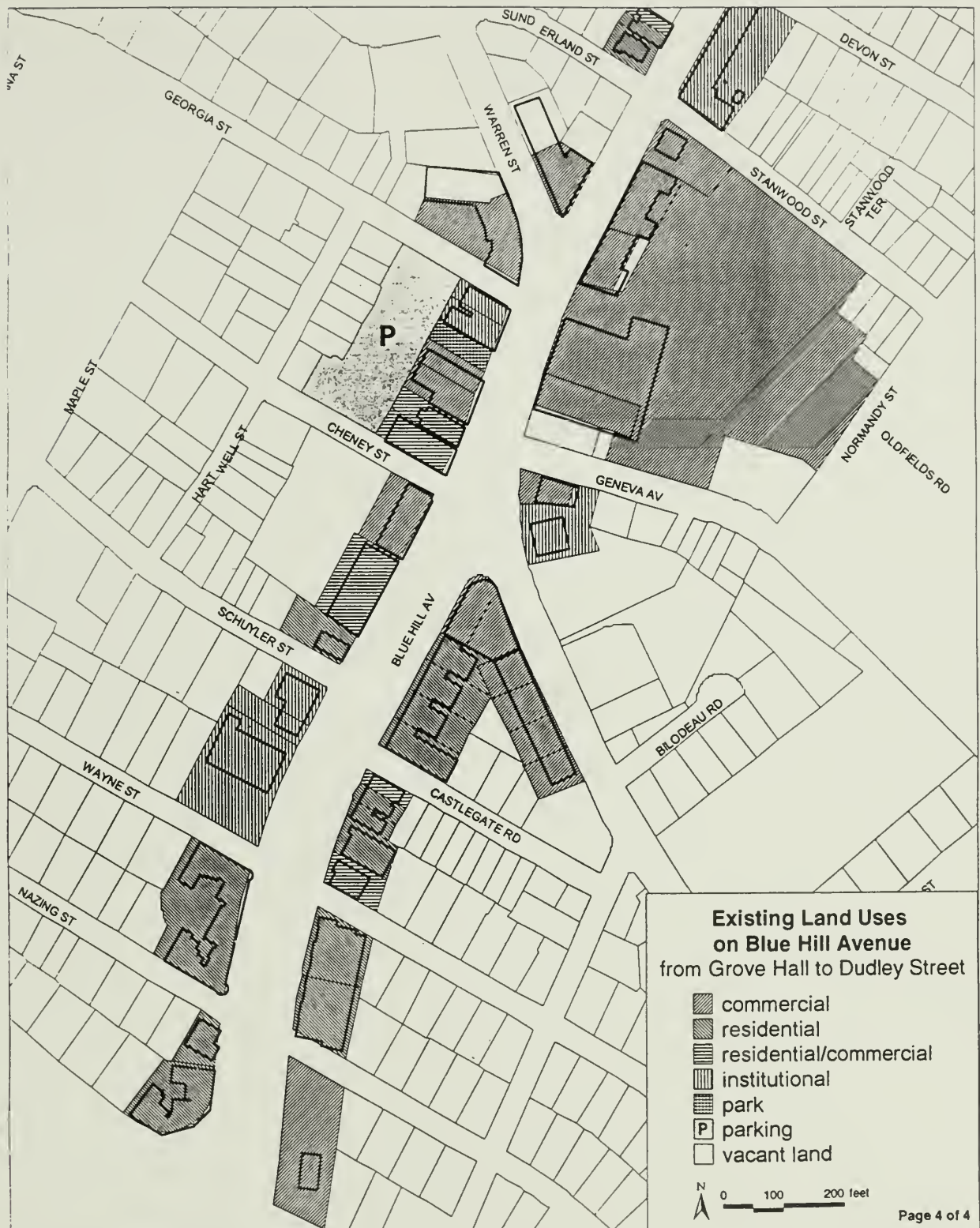


PFD Boston's Neighborhood Development Agency  
PDP Research & Development Unit 10/3/95

Land use information is based on Assessing Department data updated to July of 1994; foreclosure data were provided by PFD/HOPS in July 1995. Information may be inaccurate, incomplete or outdated.







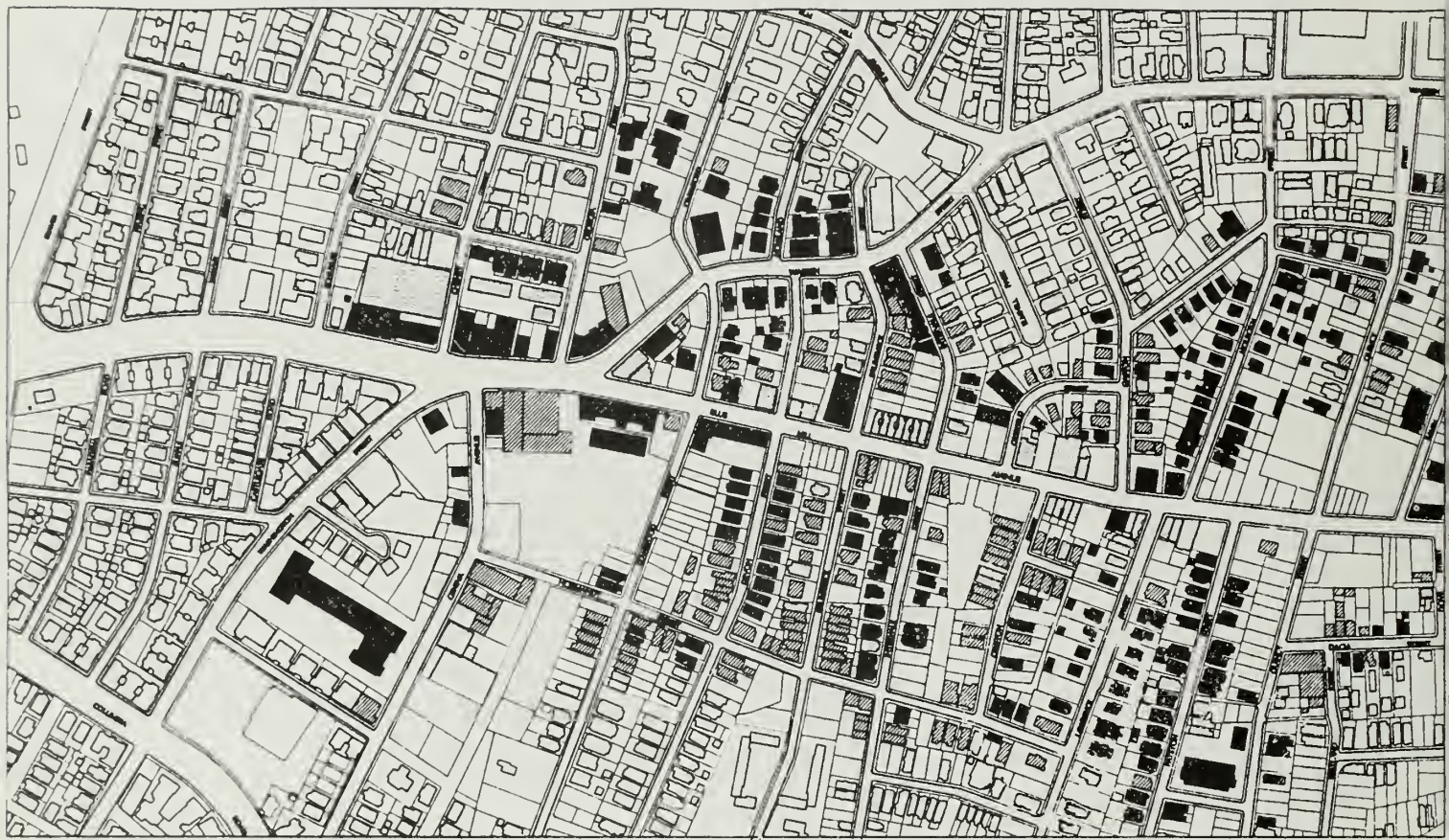






## Appendix 2 - Existing Building Conditions Map



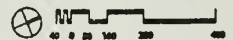


# EXISTING BUILDING CONDITIONS

-  GOOD
-  FAIR
-  POOR

## BLUE HILL AVENUE INITIATIVE - URBAN DESIGN STUDY

PUBLIC FACILITIES DEPARTMENT  
STULL AND LEE, INC.  
ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS



1/95



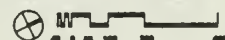


## EXISTING BUILDING CONDITIONS



## BLUE HILL AVENUE INITIATIVE - URBAN DESIGN STUDY


PUBLIC FACILITIES DEPARTMENT  
STULL AND LEE, INC.  
ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS



1/95








## **Appendix 3 -** Key Development Projects Map





#### COMPLETED

- 1 Wonder Block/Grove Hall  
15 new stores
- 2 Renaissance Building/Grove Hall:  
12 apartments, 4 businesses
- 3 Brooks School Coop; 56 unit
- 4 Green on Blue Initiative; 14 sites
- 5 Rosa Parks Childcare Building
- 6 Grove Hall Capital Improvements 
- 7 Community Garden, Cardinal Madeiros
- 8 Supportive Housing – Women's Institute Inc.
- 9 Casa Esperanza; Lotino Women

#### ONGOING

- 10 471 Blue Hill/Grove Hall  
1 Business
- 10a 469 Blue Hill/Grove Hall  
1 Business
- 11 Winthrop Estates Dudley Triangle  
36 homes
- 12 Stafford Heights Coop Dudley Triangle  
44 units
- 13 Dudley Town Commons
- 14 Savin/Maywood; 14 new homes
- 15 20 Vine/Community Center
- 16 Urban Systems Blue Hill Avenue Street  
Reconstruction (from GH to Dudley St.  
& from Dudley St. to Dudley Square)
- 17 Woodville Park Properties  
2– 1 family owner occupied;  
2 demo properties– abutter lots
- 18 Community Garden; Savin Maywood

## KEY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS



- 19 Caroline Academy; 515 Blue Hill Avenue
- 20 Beauford Gardens; 20 units  
home ownership program
- 21 449 Dudley St.; 2 units  
for previously homeless
- 22 La Alianza, Friendship Garden
- 23 Proposed municipal parking lots
- 24 32-34 Hartwell St. 6 family rental
- 25 95 Brunswick St.; 2 family
- 26 24 Creston St.; 3 family rehab.
- 27 9 Dove St.; 1 family, owner occupied
- 28 11 Perrin St.; 2 family, owner occupied
- 29 475 Dudley St.; 3 unit rental  
& 1 commercial
- 30 5 and 70 Forrest St.;  
2 and 1 family, owner occupied
- 31 152, 154 Washington St.;  
6 family rental


- 32 Nuestra Comunidad Housing Sites
- 33 New Auto Center; Swifty Site
- 34 Grove Hall Clock Tower

## BLUE HILL AVENUE INITIATIVE - URBAN DESIGN STUDY

PUBLIC FACILITIES DEPARTMENT  
STULL AND LEE, INC.  
ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS







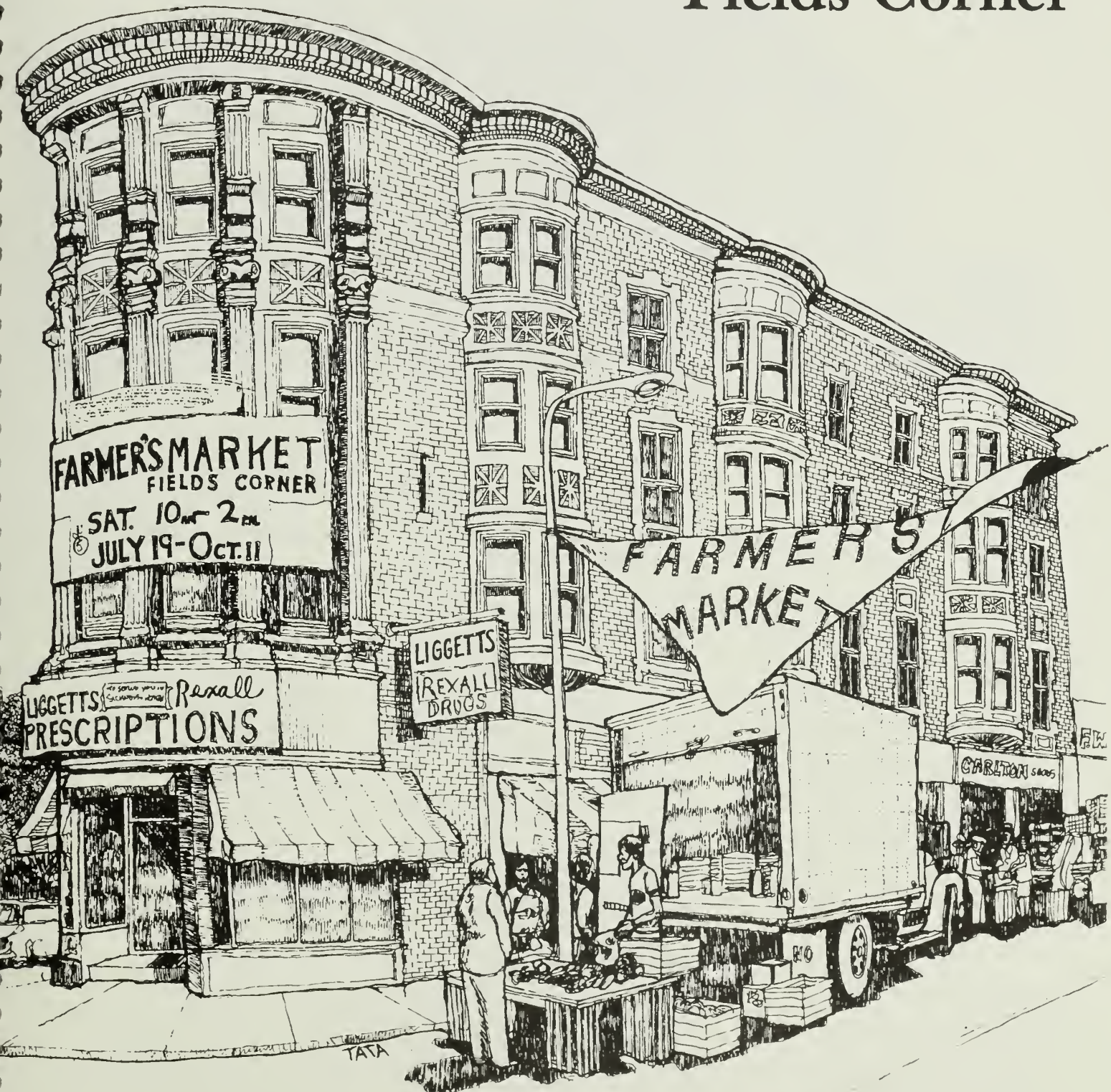
## **Appendix 4 -** Sample Development Guidelines

- 4.1 Fields Corner Design Guidelines**  
by: Vision, the Center for Environmental  
Design and Education  
for: City of Boston Neighborhood  
Development Agency  
1980
- 4.2 Design Guidelines for the  
Downtown/Harbor District**  
by: CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares  
Casendino Inc.  
for: the Downtown/Harbor Corporation  
March 1992
- 4.3 Beacon Street Guidelines (Excerpt)**  
by: the Planning Department  
for: the Town of Brookline, MA  
June 1993





Design Guidelines for  
Commercial Property Improvement  
**Fields Corner**



# Approaches



## Repair and Maintenance

A good maintenance program will extend the life of a building, save money in the long run and contribute to the continued vitality of a neighborhood.

- The roof, gutters and downspouts and foundation walls should be checked for leaks.
- Walls around windows, porches or fire escapes, and seams within exterior paneling, siding or brick facades should be checked.
- When moving into a new space or adding new equipment, the heating, ventilating, air conditioning and electrical systems should be checked and upgraded as necessary.
- Wood siding and trim should be scraped, cleaned, painted or stained regularly.
- Broken bricks should be replaced and masonry repointed as the mortar crumbles.
- Stucco should be patched and painted. When necessary a wall should be restuccoed.
- Windows should be checked to see if rehanging, sealing, caulking or replacing is required.
- Wood clapboards or shingles should be cleaned, repaired, replaced or painted.
- Original decorative elements such as column capitals, cornice moldings and brackets, and moldings around doors, windows and signs should be repaired and accented.
- As lightbulbs burn out, they should be replaced.
- Windows should be cleaned regularly.
- Signs should be cleaned, repainted or repaired as necessary.
- Displays and advertising should be changed or updated regularly.
- As awnings rip they should be patched or replaced.
- Door hardware should be maintained in good working order.



# Approaches



## Renovation and Reconstruction

Renovation involves a general upgrading of a building's external appearance. It can consist of accentuating the existing features of the building through painting, replacement, or other treatment; the addition of design elements which may or may not have appeared on the original building but which are in keeping with the building's character, and a general revamping of signage.

Renovation should not be confused with restoration or historic preservation, in which meticulous care is taken to return a building to the design and condition in which it existed at a particular point in time. Rather, renovation is a contemporary solution which emphasizes long-term, yet economical, improvements. It respects the architectural features which enhance the building and removes those — such as “false fronts” — that detract or conceal it. The height, width, original proportions, construction materials, textures, lines and width of an existing building are some of the factors which must be taken into account prior to starting a renovation project. Also, old photographs, if available, can be very helpful in assessing the building's potential and making decisions about the type of changes to undertake.

- Buildings which are historic or old but in excellent condition should be restored rather than modernized.

- When restoring an older building new walls should be built of traditional materials such as brick, stone or wood.
- Signs should be located in the panels or bands provided for them in the facade of older buildings.
- Historic details should be repaired or rebuilt.
- New features should be either simple enough to accentuate historic details, or modeled after the details of the original period.
- New additions and details should be matched with the existing building. Take into account the existing details and the period in which the building was constructed.
- The number of different colors and materials on a building should be limited.
- Sign materials, colors, locations and typeface should be unified across a building facade.
- Shops housed in the same building should be unified with similar awnings, plantings, lighting and siding.
- Bright and bold graphics may be used to give a modern feel to a building.
- Let the different functions in a building be expressed on the facade — residential, commercial and office areas should be clearly differentiated.

# Approaches



## Substantial Rehabilitation and New Construction

The following design principles apply when a building's use is changed drastically, when an addition is built onto an existing structure or when a new building is constructed on a vacant lot.

When a gas station is converted to a florist shop, or a factory is converted into housing, the appearance of the building should reflect this change in function. For instance, a florist shop should have an airy feeling, with lots of light, large expanses of glass and natural materials and colors. In housing we expect to see incandescent lighting, residential type landscaping and windows small enough for privacy and low enough for occupants to see out.

An addition should be compatible with the original building. The scale, texture and materials should be similar.

A new building also should fit into its surroundings. Otherwise it may look awkward and disrupt the rhythm of the streetscape.

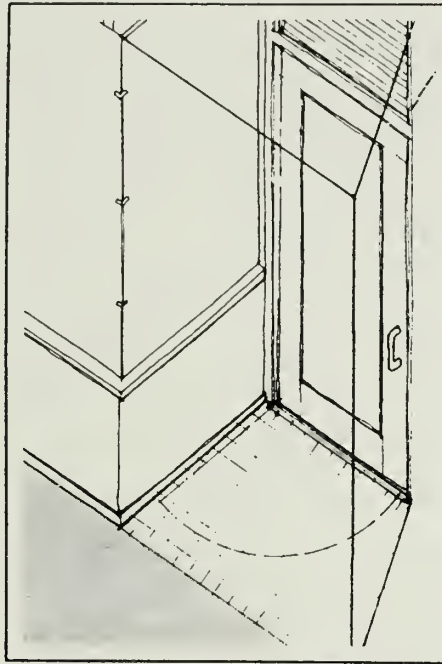
Construction plans should reflect a balance between the existing architecture on the street and good contemporary design. This is most easily accomplished by taking into account the materials (e.g., brick, wood), features (e.g., arched windows, columns), and scale (e.g., number of stories, size and spacing of windows) of adjacent buildings.

- The appearance of a building should be changed when its function changes significantly.
- New additions should be matched to the existing building.
- New buildings should be designed to complement or blend into the neighborhood.

# Design Guidelines



## 10 Elements

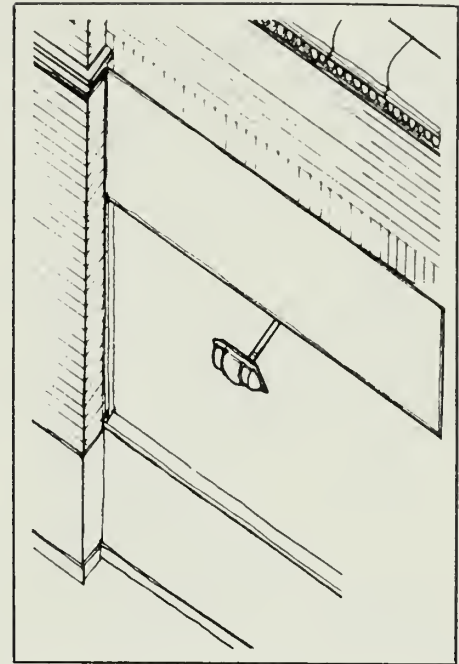


## Doors and Entrances

Most of the doors to shops in Fields Corner are standard aluminum and glass doors which have replaced wooden doors in the course of past remodeling efforts, although wooden doors are still common. During remodeling, doors should be selected to harmonize with the building facade. Avoid conflicts of style: a "colonial" door should not be added to a twentieth century masonry building.

During facade renovations, **original wooden "storefront" doors should be retained by repair and refinishing.** Aluminum doors should, like window frames, be chosen to work with the color of building materials. **Dark finishes (black, bronze, grey, brown)** with brick and dark materials, "silver" and bright finishes with tile and glossy materials and either finish with concrete buildings may be used.

**New doorways should be in a recessed entranceway.** This forms a protected area for customers between inside and outside. It also adds interest to the street and allows more viewing of display windows.

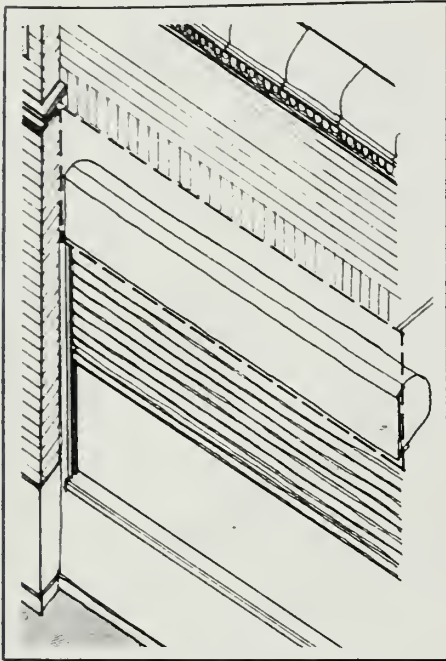


## Facade Lighting

Store facades do not need separate lighting. At night, display windows should be lit from within. This makes the merchandise display a form of store advertising and adds light and interest to the sidewalk. **Any facade lighting should be restricted to the building sign, the light that comes from street fixtures, and internal display and window lighting.**



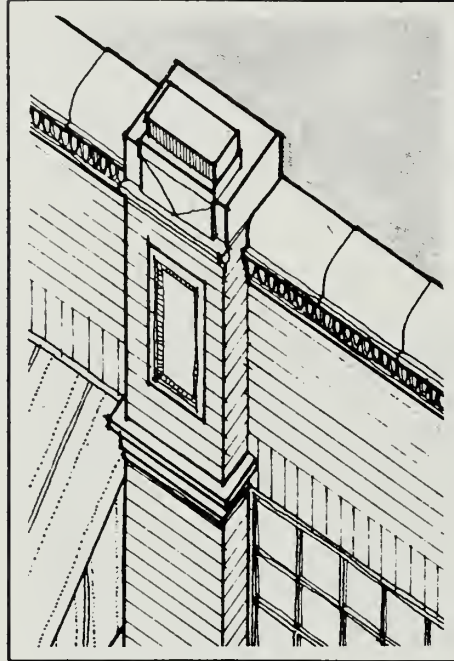
# Design Guidelines



**Security**

Security is a major concern of most Fields Corner merchants. Vandalism and theft are the primary problems facing store owners. The most effective solution to these problems is the installation of moveable grilles on the storefront, either the type that roll down from above, or the accordian type which folds to the side.

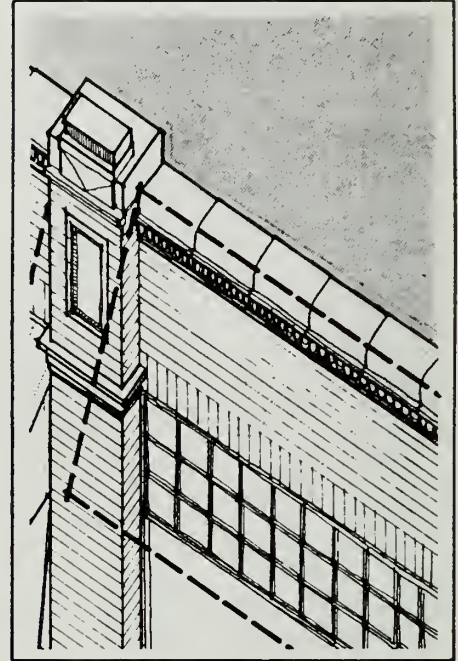
If security grilles are installed as part of a new storefront, they **must be incorporated into the store design and not simply attached to the surface**. Roll down open grilles are preferred because they allow store displays and the store interior to be seen from the street. Accordian screens must be concealed from sight when not in use, and the use of solid type roll down grilles is discouraged. If selected, they should be painted to improve their appearance when in use. **Permanently attached grilles, wire mesh screens or demountable screens and grilles should be avoided.**



**Decorative Details**

Most commercial facades have some decorative architectural details. Some occur over the entire length of the block, establishing an architectural continuity. This continuity is defined by a uniform molding or coping line, decorative details or by columns and piers which give rhythm and scale to the storefront of a building. Some of these architectural details have been covered with false roof fronts or large sign panels. Such additions destroy the architectural continuity of the building and detract from the quality of the streetscape. Details and ornamentation are a vital part of the commercial area's visual character and should not be destroyed during renovation.

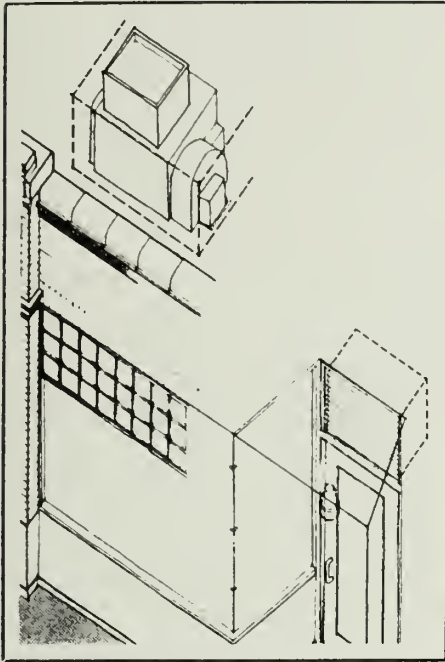
**Architectural details of the building frame must be retained and enhanced during facade renovations.** New storefronts and signs must not cover significant building detailing. If a detail cannot be maintained or repaired in its original form, it can be modified or simplified to match the original in size and appearance without disturbing the character of the building and storefront.



**Roofs and Cornices**

Most one and two story commercial roofs are flat and not visible from the sidewalk and street. Remodelings have introduced **flat fascia panels as well as pitched and Mansard roofs** which disrupt an otherwise unified facade appearance. **This type of treatment should be avoided.** Likewise, the addition of imitation "colonial" pediments to existing cornices and roof lines should be avoided. By revealing the original roof and cornice lines, rather than concealing them, improvements can restore the unity of the facade and relate it to the surrounding commercial environment. Cornices are often elaborately ornamental and detailed, emphasizing the horizontal continuity of the street as well as providing a termination to building facades. Most cornices will remain in sound condition with little maintenance. **Wooden, brick, metal or softstone cornices must be periodically repaired, patched and painted.** Missing details should be replaced during renovation.

# Design Guidelines



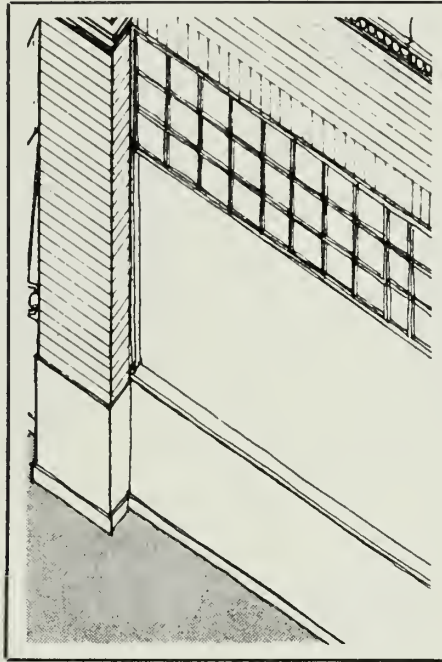
## 12 Building Equipment

Air conditioning units protruding from windows and supported by brackets obscure attractive facades. They are also noisy, and have a tendency to drip on pedestrians and customers passing below. Air conditioning units should be placed on rear and side facades when possible. **If the addition of an air conditioner unit to the street facade is unavoidable, it must be mounted flush with the exterior wall surface.** A drain must be installed to properly carry condensed water away from the unit to the ground.

**Roof-top mechanical equipment should be lowered beneath the parapet line or must be screened and painted with a color that blends with the roofscape.**

**Street numbers for entrance doors are a small and inexpensive detail that must be included in any facade improvement.** At the least, the street address should be located on the main entrance door.

Numbers should be in a simple, legible style and can either be painted on or adhered directly on the glass. Fancy styles or script numbering are not allowed.



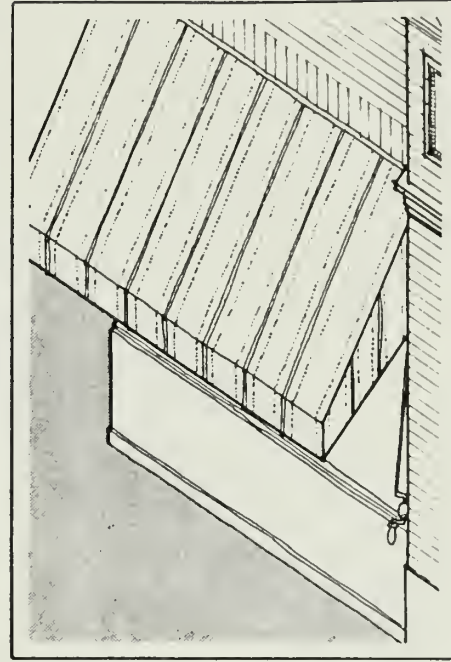
## Windows

The windows of retail stores vary in size and shape depending on the nature of the business as well as the architectural style. Large plate glass windows are indigenous to stores and small mullioned windows are characteristic of taverns.

When designing new window treatments, it is important to relate the proposed design to the facade of the whole block. Colonial windows with small frames, however attractive, can disrupt the continuity of a block facade which is entirely composed of large plate glass windows.

When choosing wooden or aluminum replacement window frames, pay special attention to their color and finish. Select colored trims to work with the building details. **Dark finishes (black, bronze, grey, brown) should be used with brick and dark materials, "silver" and shiny finishes should be used with tile and glossy materials. Either color frame can be used with concrete buildings.**

Pay attention to the size of replacement windows; stock sizes are not appropriate for renovation if they do not match the original sizes and shapes of the building. **Blocking down or filling in older openings to fit standard size sashes must be avoided.**



## Awnings

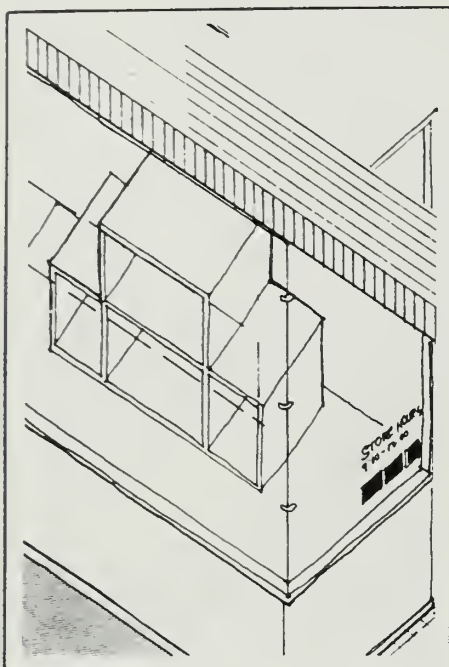
Awnings and canopies have been traditionally used in urban areas to give protection from the weather, as well as to protect window merchandise from the sun. In addition, awnings and canopies can provide color and a three-dimensional appearance to a facade. Printed with the name and street number of the store and properly designed and maintained, they can add to the character of the street and commercial area.

**Heavy canvas should be used for all awnings and canopies, and should be replaced when weathered, faded or damaged. Aluminum and plastic canopies should not be used.**

To extend their useful life, awnings should be of the retractable type to avoid possible damage through vandalism and other causes.



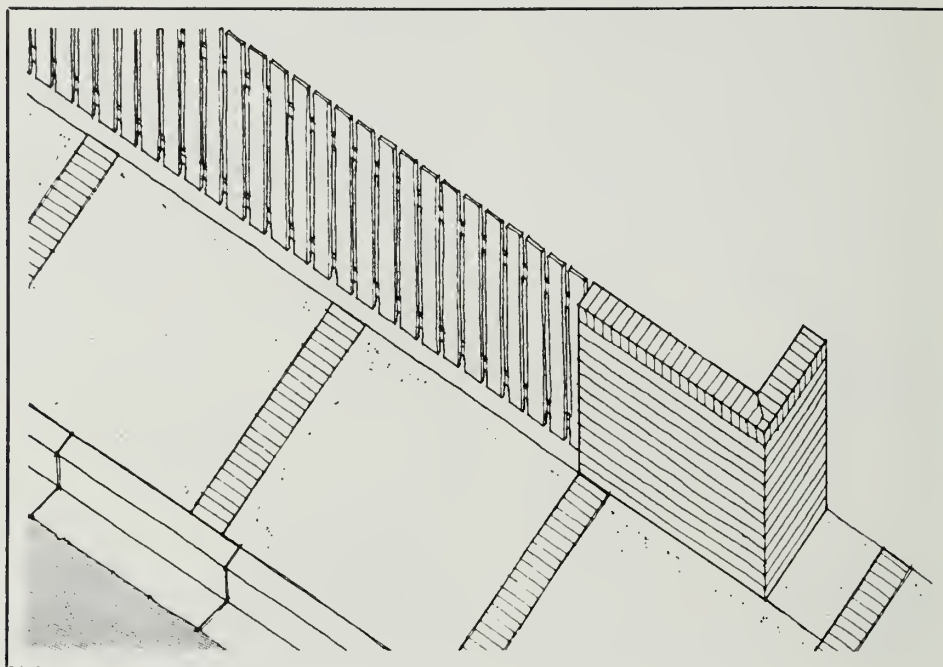
# Design Guidelines



## Window Displays

Window displays are an important part of the overall visual appearance of shops and storefronts. An interesting display of merchandise arranged to be seen by passing pedestrians, and an open view to the store itself, can act as its own advertisement. Displays can be organized by using large items of merchandise, or through a system of shelves and display boxes for smaller items.

Information such as store hours, credit cards accepted, parking information, etc., should be clearly organized in one area near the store entrance. A disorganized display of temporary paper signs gives a sloppy impression when attached to the inside of a store window. Special sale announcements should be displayed in a balanced way, and should be removed when the sale is over. Temporary posters announcing community events should be arranged neatly in one area and removed as soon as the date has passed.



## Landscaping and Sitework

Individual site elements such as planting, paving, curbing, fencing, etc. can contribute significantly to the visual quality of a building and its surroundings.

Concrete and asphalt are the most common paving materials. Although they are suitable for many conditions, large uninterrupted areas of these materials should be avoided when possible. Traditional paving materials such as brick, or granite pavers, offer rich textures and natural tones which blend well with the Fields Corner Business District. These traditional materials should be used whenever possible.

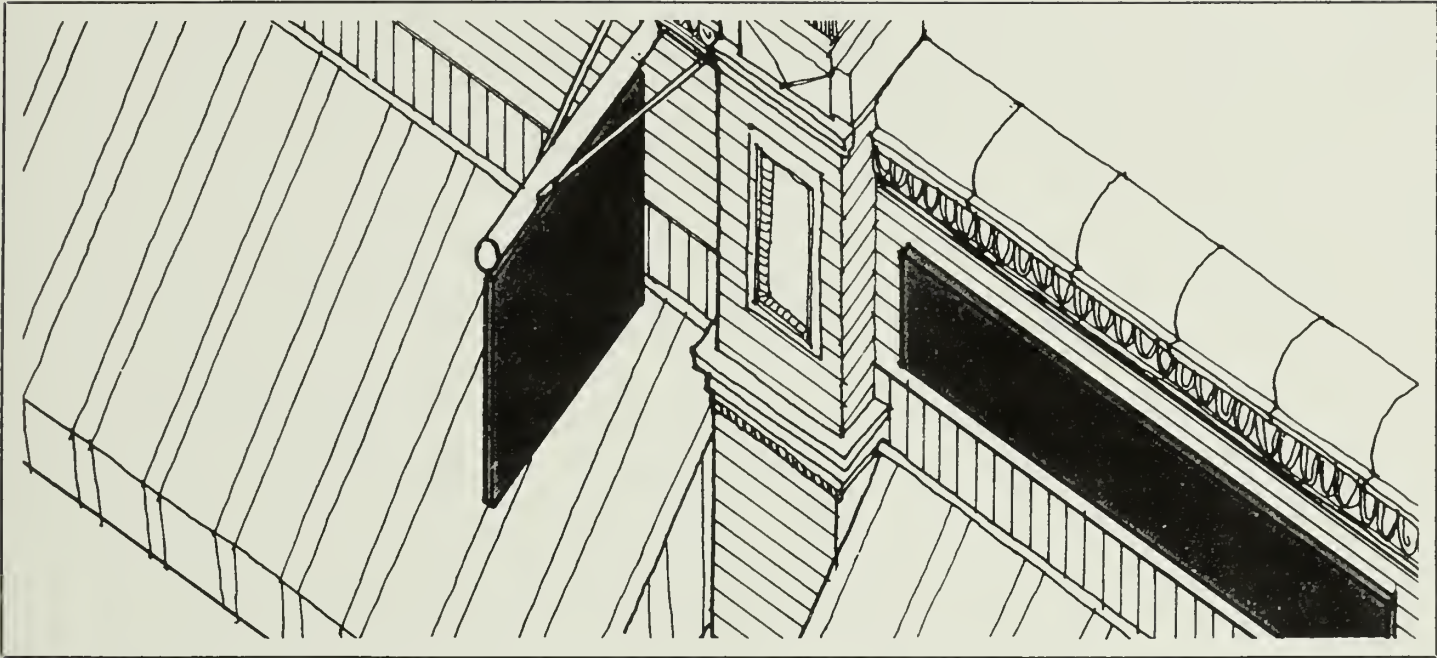
Walls and fences have always been important streetscape elements. Large paved areas for off-street parking should be visually screened from the street by walls, fences or plantings. Natural stone or brick walls work well, as do painted wood board or picket fences. Unless they can be concealed by plantings, concrete block walls, chain link fences and natural wood board or split rail fences should be avoided wherever possible.

Trees, shrubs, flowers and grass have a strong visual impact upon a building. Plantings can offer shade and/or privacy, while adding color and texture to the area. If trees or large shrubs are to be planted, they should be located with their ultimate size in mind. Plantings should be considered as

building elements to be balanced and proportioned in accordance with the building they surround. Special opportunities for other plantings also exist. Where the sidewalk is wide, or a building is set back, plant beds or boxes can be installed. Window boxes provide an additional opportunity for color and should be considered as well. A landscape architect or a local nursery will be able to provide additional information with regard to site improvements.



# Design Guidelines



## 4 Signs

All storefront signs in Fields Corner should conform to the Boston Sign Code. The following are the major points and limits of this code:

- Signs may include only the street number, the name and kinds of business, service or facility conducted on the premises, the year the business was established, a slogan, the hours of operation, time and temperature and lettering that is part of a trademark.
- Trademarks are limited to no more than 25% of the area of a sign face.
- Any lighting must be continuous, no flashing or blinking lights are permitted.
- All signs must be stationary.
- No signs may extend above the cornice line of the building.
- Projecting signs cannot exceed 24 square feet on a side, cannot have exposed guy wires or turnbuckles and the bottom of the sign must be at least 10 feet above the ground (any sign projecting more than 12 inches over a public way requires a permit from the Boston Public Improvement Commission, and is taxable).
- Signs attached parallel to a building can project no more than 15 inches from the building surface.
- The top of any sign can be no higher than either 25 feet above grade, the top of sills

of the first level of windows above the first story, the lowest point of the roof, or the top of the parapet of one story buildings, whichever is lowest.

- Permanent signs on the inside of a window cannot exceed 30% of the total glass area.
- The total area of all signs cannot exceed either 50 square feet or the length of the building's street frontage multiplied by 2 square feet, whichever is greatest.

In addition to the requirements of the Boston City Sign Code, the Design Advisory Group has established the following standards:

- The sign should fit within the lines and panels of the storefront as defined by the building frame and architectural detailing. Signs should be placed where it respects an existing sign line established by the signs on adjacent stores in the same block.
- Signs should work with the materials of the facade. They should be maintained easily and capable of withstanding climatic variations. Painted wood or metal is the preferred background, and letters may be painted, carved into wood, or individually mounted. Plastic may be used if it is carefully designed and is fabricated with another finish.

- Mass-produced plastic signs convey a powerful corporate image and are inappropriate to the shopping street.
- Indirect light should be used to illuminate the signs, and to draw attention to the surrounding facade. Use incandescent rather than fluorescent light sources for a truer color rendition.
- Colors should be limited in number and should complement the colors used in the rest of the facade. Avoid glossy backgrounds as they reflect glare and reduce legibility. Signs directed toward pedestrians can make use of subtle color relationships, shading, outlining, and decorative borders.



DESIGN GUIDELINES

for the

DOWNTOWN/HARBOR DISTRICT

PLYMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS

March 1992

Plymouth Downtown/Harbor Corporation



## STOREFRONT FACADE GUIDELINES

### A. General Principles

#### 1. Facades with Historic Merit

Facades with historic merit are defined as facades on buildings which are historic by virtue of their age, and have merit in that the original building retains elements or general characteristics that are identifiable in terms of style.

Wherever practical, improvements of facades with historic merit should be sympathetic in style and materials to the original, historic character. So, for example, buildings originally designed in a particular Victorian style should have improvements reminiscent of that style. Buildings constructed in the colonial era should be refurbished to recreate colonial characteristics. Complete restoration is appropriate if it is practical for current uses, and where the quality of the surviving elements of the original building make preservation meaningful. It is not the intention to choose any particular era or architectural style as a standard for all facades, and require conformity. If possible, historic photographs should be used as a resource for design and design review discussions.

#### 2. Other Facades

Some facades have little or no historic merit. Many of these facades require improvements, but restoration along "historic" lines is impossible. This category includes facades designed in contemporary styles. This category includes facades which mimic historic styles with inappropriate elements which are not authentic. This category also includes facades of historic structures when the form and use of the building has been so substantially altered that no significant remnants or indication of its original character remain.

In the cases of facades which either have no clear character, or which visually conflict with their surroundings, improvements should follow these guidelines to create a historically sympathetic character.

"Historically sympathetic character" means a pattern of windows, vertical and horizontal elements, signage and decoration that is reminiscent of successful patterns used in commercial storefront and building design in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is not intended to encourage colonial styles, or historic reproductions that mimic in extensive detail a particular historic style or expression.

#### B. Facade Composition

In general, facades should have a classical composition of pediment or frieze at the top, a band of windows separated by vertical supports or pilasters in the middle, and a base at the bottom.

In the case of multi-story buildings, the storefront should be an arrangement of windows and doors that correspond to the alignment of upper story facade elements. For example, the storefront elements should align with either the windows or the wall space between windows on the facade of the upper floors.

#### C. Facade Elements

The storefront facade should be composed of the following elements:

##### 1. Sign Frieze:

The uppermost part of the facade spanning the length of the storefront below. It consists of an articulated panel framed between a cornice and a base fascia.

##### 2. Pilasters:

Vertical expressions reminiscent of columns which are applied to the facade, subdividing the facade, and offering visual support to sign frieze or building facade above.

##### 3. Storefront Glazing:

Clear glass in coated or painted wood frame and generally segmented to create a vertical emphasis. Frames should not be metallic in appearance.

#### 4. Transom Glazing:

Where facade height allows, a transom should be incorporated into the upper portion of the storefront glazing. The transom should be constructed no lower than the head of the store entry door.

#### 5. Base Panel:

Stone base panels are preferred, where it is a consistent material with other portions of the facade. Wood or metal base panels should be articulated with raised or recessed detail, or have a decorative metal grille recessed within the panel frame.

#### 6. Doors and Windows

Doors and windows should have substantial appearing sills, rails, mullions, muntins and frames. They should be painted or coated in a non-metallic finish. Divided lites should specifically be applied only if consistent with the historical origins of the facade.

### D. Materials

The materials of the storefront should be constructed primarily of wood or profiled metal with a painted or coated finish that is non-metallic in character. Decorative metal grilles are also acceptable as inserts to the base panel or transom areas of the facade.

### E. Colors

Colors should generally be used to help accentuate the architecture; colored surfaces should not be distracting or call attention to the color itself. Colors may vary, and should be appropriate to the original character of historic facades.

Tones should be muted rather than ostentatious. Trim colors may be used to accentuate architectural character, but should not be exaggerated.

Awnings and signage should be provide colorful accent to the basic building design and color scheme.



Examples of colors and tones which have been found to be consistent with the goals of these guidelines include the following selections from Hancock Paint colors.

Beiges/Browns/Yellows:

Taupe	Cohasset Stucco
Colonial Cream	Palacio
Doodle Bug	Hawks Bill
Quincy Adams Yellow	Pantalets
Wolf Hound	Redwood
Chaps	Barn Red

White/Grays:

Telescope Gray	Navajo White
Nantucket Gray	Puritain White
Pilgrims Gray	Cream Napkins
Harwichport Gray	Old Virginia White
Pewter	Blackened Pot
Mason Gray	London Fog

Blues/Greens:

Hamilton Blue	Seafarer
Spruce Blue	Scale Blue
Coal Blue	Yankee Blue

F. Lighting

Storefront lighting should be confined to highlighting signage and display windows. Unobtrusive and indirect spotlights are recommended and should be incandescent. No backlit signs will be allowed nor will the use of fluorescent lighting on any part of the facade. Light fixtures should be of the hook type or the extended arm type if practical. These are fixtures which are attached to the face or top of the facade, and with an arm extending outwards holding a lamp and cover which direct the light back towards the facade. Fixtures which mimic historic styles should be avoided.

G. Awnings

Awnings are encouraged. Simple, angular shapes are appropriate; rounded forms are specifically discouraged - they are contemporary in style, and inappropriate in historic settings.

Continuous awnings on large facades are discouraged. Rather, they should be broken into segments corresponding to the vertical rhythm of the facade.

## H. Signage

Sign graphics should consist of carved, incised, painted or raised lettering and be confined to the signage frieze, the awnings, or permanently applied to the glazing areas. Blade signs are also permitted mounted perpendicular to the facade in line with the sign frieze.

Plaques describing the history of a building or its date, if desired, should be located to be visible to pedestrians and compatible with the facade/architectural expression.

## I. Illustrations

The following illustrations describe typical design element and relationships which compose traditional facades. Actual choices of materials, details and relationships should be responsive to the character, history and use of each building facade.







NOTICE:  
All improvements on Public  
Property requires the review  
and approval of the Department  
of Public Works.

Adopted by the  
Planning Board  
6/24/93

## BEACON STREET GUIDELINES

Beacon Street is a grand boulevard, Brookline's most attractive major street and a National Register District. In the interest of maintaining the qualities important to us in Brookline and setting standards or criteria for volunteer and Town efforts, we should bear in mind the following:

### A. TREES

1. Street trees - large trees or grand size trees (60-90 ft. ultimate height) should be planted in 4 rows for the full length of the street. Street tree species should be selected on the basis of their aesthetic, environmental, economic and horticultural appropriateness. Selected species should be attractive, have a high chance of surviving given the availability of water, soil, and light at the site, and have a growth form that does not require high maintenance.
2. Smaller flowering trees should be avoided and if used, planted outside the 4 rows and never on narrow sidewalks.
3. Trees that retain their leaves over winter and those with low branches should not be planted in commercial areas.
4. There should be no trees with normal leaf color other than green.
5. There should be no evergreen trees.
6. Pits should be at least 3 x 5 feet and have mulch or grates in them.
7. There should be no seasonal lighting of trees except for those lighted by the Town.
8. Since trees are the most important aspect of the framework of Beacon Street, all efforts should be made to protect them and to ensure their survival.

### B. STREET FURNITURE

1. All street furniture should be chosen to reinforce the commercial area identity. Lighting, benches, trash containers, fencing, etc should be chosen with that in mind.

2. MBTA shelters should all be the same except those of historical significance at Coolidge Corner. The shelter at St. Paul Street is the least obtrusive, all others should match it.
3. Appropriately designed fencing in the median should be encouraged to protect landscaping at T stops and uncontrolled midblock crossing.
4. Trash receptacles such as those contributed by the Chamber are excellent. The Town should encourage more of this kind of contribution.
5. There should be no mounds or berms. The original grade of the roadway and median should be maintained.
6. No curbing materials other than granite is acceptable.

#### C. SIGNS

1. It is important that the Town minimize signs on our Town most important street. Since it is also a National Register District, it deserves more than the standard respect. It would be better to publish in the newspaper several times a year the volunteer efforts, rather than providing small but very expensive signs at every intersection. Having a Town ceremony to honor volunteers is another option.
2. Traffic signs should be limited. We should remove any extra signs and regard cautiously the addition of any new ones.

#### D. VOLUNTEERS

1. Volunteers should be encouraged to appreciate Beacon Street as a public space rather than a domestic one.
2. Funds from volunteer associations can be used advantageously. Possible uses are:
  - a. Funding a window expert to help those who cannot appreciate the importance of window decoration and design as an enhancement to business.
  - b. Collecting money to plant trees, replace chain link fences with better looking fencing and where fencing is appropriate, establish a fund to help with repairs.
  - c. Continue with the trash receptacle program.
  - d. Collect money to landscape Arts Council displays.



### 3. Helpful Activities

- a. Organizing spring cleanup for all commercial areas in April 4 of each year around earth day.
- b. Encouraging other merchants to remove clutter from their windows. especially paper window signs.
- c. Annual planting and maintenance in appropriate locations.

### E. LANDSCAPING

1. Permanent plantings should be limited to evergreen shrubs. including flowering evergreens. They should not be variegated.
2. No plants with thorns should be planted.
3. Perennials should not be planted in tree pits.
4. Merchants should be encouraged to create and maintain attractive, low-cost and low maintenance landscaping wherever possible to improve the attractiveness of commercial areas. Annual planting should be chosen from the list provided by the Park Department and should be planted in tree pits only as a last resort.
5. Raising the height of the tree pit or surrounding it with wood strips after the tree is established will damage the tree and make it vulnerable to disease. Excessive mulching should be avoided. (David Turner is currently reviewing this issue from the point of public safety and the Town's liability)

### F. GRAFFITI

1. Graffiti and posted signs should be removed from the public way promptly. Owners should be notified of graffiti on private property to speed up the removal process.



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## Appendix 5 - List of Participants



## Participants

**Maria Alamo**  
Dudley/Blue Hill Merchants

**Veterans Benefit Clearinghouse**

**Sunny Brent-Harding**  
Consulting Company

**Kayode Bright**  
Metro News ETC.

**Oscar Bullard**  
Greater Boston Developers

**Ronald Coard**  
Fleet Bank

**Barbara Dulin**  
New Covenant Christian Center

**Edward Dupree**

**Joseph Feaster**  
Feaster Enterprises

**Ann Fernandez**  
GHBT

**Carolyn Gibson**  
Gibraltar Associates

**George Guscott**  
Longbay Mgt.

**Ozell Hudson**  
Lawyers Committee

**Sidrah Jackson**  
Bank of Boston

**Dennis Johnson**  
Resident

**Gordon LaSane**  
LaSane Assoc.

**Ralph Lebeau**  
The Lebeau Co.

**Mr. John Lee**  
PPDC

**Walter Little**  
National Association of Real Estate Brokers

**James Lyden**  
RMSC

**Kahali Maddox-Abdego**  
NE Pan African Business Tribune

**Soodar Mahadeo**  
5-Streets N.A.

**Talib Mahdee**  
Masjid Al-Quran

**Ronald Marlow**  
Mass State Legislature

**Manuel Martinez**  
Nuestra Comunidad

**Winniefred McKesey**

**Vicki Meredith, MCP**  
Alternatives Unlimited


**William Montesino**  
Montesino Tire

**Mr. Earl Moore**  
Rep. Joseph Kennedy Office

**Virginia Morrison**  
NDC of Grove Hall

**Minister Don Muhammad**  
Nation of Islam

**Mary Murphy**  
Mt. Calvalry



**Richard O'Bryant**  
RMSC

**Richard Phipps**  
National Association of Real Estate Brokers

**Richard Prosper**  
AA Affordable Construction

**Sherran Queensborough**

**Nester Rios**  
Alianza Hispana

**Anthony Rodney**  
Neighborhood Laundromat

**Nathan Sabir**  
Masjid Al-Quran

**Fred Saunders**  
Saunders Realtors

**Faubert Smith**  
Grove Hall Board Trade

**Joyce Stanley**  
J.S. Consulting

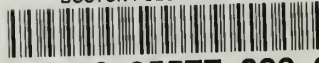
**Cheryl Straughter**  
Keith's Place

**Rev. Walter J. Waldron**  
St. Patrick's Church

**Mark Woods**  
Nuestra Comunidad

**Laura Younger**  
H.G.G.O. Betterment Assoc.

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